

113, 185, 427

Kerala AW11

[For information on tenancy reform legislation in Travancore-Cochin see 39: Patel, AW1 India, category 116, pp. 345-350.]

- 621 occupied separate sets of villages and were not
 631 subject to each others' jurisdiction. In war,
 565 however, they might interdine freely and spend
 644 the night in each others' houses. In villages
 owned by Nambudiris or by Nambudiri-owned
 temples the retainer-Nayar were of group (1),
 in royal villages, of group (2), and in chiefly
 and village headmen's lineages, of group (3).
 In Calicut and Walluvanad however, group (3)
 was further subdivided into Agattu Charna Nay-
 ars or indoor retainers, [18] and Purattu Char-
 nas or outdoor retainers. Purattu Charnas
 were retainers to chiefs and headmen, Agattu
 Charnas houseservants and clerks (with the title
 Menon - clerk) within the royal palaces. In
 Calicut, the Purattu Charnas were still further
 subdivided into ordinary Purattu Charnas who
 served chiefs and headmen, and special Purattu
 Charnas or Pariccha Menons who formed the
 personal bodyguard of the kind and senior prin-
 ces.
- 613 In each village, there were traditionally four,
 621 five or six matrilineages of the appropriate re-
 427 tainer subcaste. The separate households or
 566 property-groups within each lineage had the
 hereditary right, granted by the Raja, to occupy
 freely stretches of garden land, and to lease
 large plots of wet rice land on long-term tenure
 from the janmi. This tenure was called kanam;
 the tenant, a kanamdar or kanakkaran. At the
 start of a period of tenure, the legal guardian
 (oldest man or karanavan) of the Nayar retainer
 household paid a lump sum in cash to the janmi,
 called kanam. Thereafter he paid an annual rent

613 in kind, from which was deducted a small pro-
621 portion of the original cash sum. When the ori-
•427 ginal sum had been exhausted the kanakkaran
566 recommenced paying full rent, or renewed the
sum, or else surrendered the land. It seems
likely that these sums [19] of money were tra-
ditionally paid only on the succession to head-
ship of a new janmi or a new kanakkaran on the
death of the old, or at irregular intervals con-
venient to both parties. Both kanam and jen-
mam rights could be sold, but a kanakkaran
could not be evicted without the consent of the
local Nayar assembly. The system allowed of
a certain degree of spatial mobility and of the
periodic segmentation of the Nayar property-
group, some branches of which might even
move to another village if lands became short.
On the whole, however, kanam tenures were of
long duration, and a Nayar property-group might
remain stable for several generations.

566 In addition to their role as tenants, members
of the retainer subcastes had other economic
and also ritual relations with their landlord.

[794] They were called adiyar (servants) of their jan-
mi and must attend and participate at his house-
hold ceremonies. Women of the retainer lin-

[351] eages worked as house-servants of the janmi's
family, while older Nayar men who had retired

[427] from the army might be employed as bailiffs who
collected the janmi's rents and organized the
labour of his serfs.

564 In addition to the Nayars, members of certain
794 other aristocratic castes were usually present
in each village. These included the temple

564 within a few feet. Equal interdining took place
 [247] only between members of the same caste or sub-
 caste, but at a higher caste feast members of
 lower castes might receive food from higher
 caste hosts. The Nambudiris, royalty, chiefs,
 temple servants, retainers, middle-class and
 servant Nayers thus collectively formed the
 [611] "good" castes of the society. Nambudiris and
 two small castes of their temple servants were
 patrilineal; all the rest were matrilineal. (1)

[361] Below all these castes, living in a separate
 [713] part of the village, were the "low" or "pollut-
 ing" castes. These included in order of rank,
 Iravas or toddy-tappers and tenant-farmers, with
 20 to 50 households per village; Kanisans (as-
 trologers) with one to three households per vil-
 lage; the artisan castes (blacksmiths, gold -
 smiths, carpenters, bell-metal workers and
 stone-masons, who ranked equally) each with one
 to three houses per village; low caste washermen
 and barbers (who ranked equally) each with one
 to five houses per village; and bow-makers, each
 with about one to ten houses per village. Iravas,

[611] Kanisans, washermen and barbers had double
 [595] unilineal descent: [25] patrilineal, patrilocal ex-
 [614] tended families with fraternal polyandry, cross-c
 cut by large exogamous dispersed matrilineal
 clans. Artisans and bow-makers had patrilineal
 descent with patrilocal extended families and

[437] fraternal polyandry. All of these castes worked
 for each other and for the "good" castes of the

524 village. Iravas, the most numerous and influen-
 •427 tial, owned their own house-sites and leased rice-
 lands and other garden lands from the matrilineal

524 kanam tenants of the village, on a triennial ten-
 427 ure (verum-pattam) retaining about one-fifth of
 the produce for their own sustenance and paying
 564 the rest as rent in kind. One or more small
 437 patrilineal groups of each of the other castes had
 what was called a desam avakasam or "village
 right," namely the right to work exclusively for
 members of their natal village. Sometimes, in
 the case of small castes such as astrologers and
 barbers, the right might extend to several ad-
 jacent villages who collectively shared the labour
 of one servant family. Avakasams were heredi-
 tary in patrilineal groups; they involved payment
 in paddy and vegetables by each patron house-
 hold, of whatever caste, after the two harvests
 of the year, and the right to take part in village
 festivals and be fed at higher caste festivals and
 marriages.

[791] Astrologers and artisans were hired by all the
 higher castes of the village, by each other and

[305] by Iravas who ranked above them. Barbers
 worked for all the lower polluting castes of this
 group, but not for the "good" castes who em-

[296] ployed the Nayar barber. Washermen laundered
 for all the lower polluting castes but not regularly
 for the "good" castes, who employed the Nayar
 washerman; however, the low [26] caste washer-
 man's lineage must provide clean cloths for the
 "good" castes after death, menstruation and
 childbirth and had ritual obligations to high
 caste women on the two latter occasions. Bow-

564 makers served Nayars and Iravas. Each of the
 783 lower polluting castes was endogamous and inter-
 dined equally only within the caste. Rules of

592 (except for cleaning) only by men of the group
 342 and their male visitors. Within, a passage
 leads to the central courtyard, round which
 [352] rooms open off on two or three sides. These
 include the ancestor-shrine of the group, sev-
 eral store-rooms for clothing, vessels and
 paddy (stored in carved wooden chests), one or
 more bed- and [55] sitting-rooms each contain-
 ing a bedroll, bench, wooden stools and a rope
 to hang clothes; and a small room used by wo-
 men during their delivery and menstrual seclu-
 sions. Beyond the courtyard to the west is a
 long narrow dining hall with a large kitchen be-
 hind it, and behind this the back verandah occu-
 pied only by servants, women and children.
 Upstairs may be four or five empty bedrooms
 in which women receive their visiting husbands.
 Men born into the group seldom enter the up-
 stairs' rooms and may not use the women's
 staircase.

[427] Outside in the courtyard a separate building
 [987] may be devoted to storing paddy paid as rents
 by the group's tenants. The upstairs of the
 [343] building is often set aside for the karanavan's¹
 use; here he sleeps, is served with food by wo-
 men of the house, entertains his friends and
 keeps records of the group's economic transac-
 tions. If the group is large, a second separate
 building is often reserved for junior men to
 sleep, read and entertain friends when they are
 593 not visiting their wives. In village headmen's
 342 and chiefly property-groups whose women often
 have Nambudiri husbands, a separate building
 with its own kitchen, granary and Brahman
¹[Eldest man of the property group - Analyst]

601 (m. sp.). Except in a few "modern" marriages men do not address the wife's kin by terms, but instead use the name and caste title: many informants said they would not use terms for the wife's kinsfolk because they did not feel that they were kin - a traditional attitude. The main modern change therefore is the extension of primarily matrilineal terms to parallel kin of the father's matrilineal terms to parallel kin of the father's matrilineal group and their spouses. As it stands today, the terminological system thus faithfully reflects an extreme matrilineal system which has recently shifted towards bilaterality. [88]

613 VI. The Structure of the Royal Lineages

644 We saw that the traditional property-group of
423 retainer Nayars divided into segments when male members of the mother's generation were all dead, and that correspondingly the lineages of retainer Nayars went through a gradual process of fission between their major segments every
[427] few generations. This state of affairs was in harmony with the relatively temporary relationship of retainer Nayars to the land, as kanam tenants, since kanam tenure permitted segments of a tarayas to hive off at intervals with ease.

This was not the case with the property-groups of royal and naduvari lineages, which were held together for longer periods by their joint ownership of extensive jenmam lands and by their political offices. These royal and chiefly taravads in most cases developed a somewhat different structure which enabled them to cohere for

613 elder sister or classificatory sister he must
 644 send a messenger to call her into the common
 593 hall. After the age of 15 he may not speak to a
 younger sister or classificatory sister, and may
 see them only in the distance. Contact between
 children and their Nambudiri fathers, as be-
 tween princes and their Nambudiri brothers-in-
 law, is also restricted: the Nambudiris live
 and eat separately from the princes, served by
 their own Brahman servants. It is obvious that
 such restrictions on social relations within the
 palace militate against affinal and intertavari
 quarrels, as well as against incest.

613 On all four sides of the palace are roads lead-
 644 ing into the village. This is crowded with the
 361 houses of Nayar retainers, each one of which
 427 is in some way connected with the palace, and
 leases kanam lands from it. Many dwelling-
 groups are those of the princes' Nayar wives
 and children, chiefly of the Pariccha Menon sub-
 caste; their forbears formed the private army
 of the Zamorin in traditional times. Other some-
 what poorer households belong to the Agattu
 Charna and Pallichan subcastes; both men and
 women work in the place, since each adult mem-
 ber living in it employs two Nayar servants of
 his or her own sex to do housework and act as
 messengers. The servants are still paid daily
 in rice.

613 [92] The lands of the kovilagam are held in the
 644 name of the eldest woman, but are managed by
 423 the karanavan who also receives and distri-
 butes the pensions of his group in amounts which
 differ according to age-rank in the group. This

lages. The men were often clerks in the palaces. In Cochin, castes 564
two and three were amalgamated and were called Swarupattil Sudra
Nayars or "palace servants."

Fourth, a caste called Pallichan Nayars, both in Calicut and Cochin.
Its members also were vassals in the villages of royalty, chiefs, and
of the greater Brahmans. The men were often palanquin bearers as
well as soldiers.

Fifth, a caste called Sudra Nayars in Calicut and Illath ("Brahman
house") Sudras in Cochin. The members lived in villages owned by
Brahman families or on the estates of Brahmanical temples.

The mutual ritual ranking of these five castes seems to have varied 564
in different districts. In some districts they ranked in the order given, 554
and men of a higher caste might marry women of a lower caste;
the reverse was in theory forbidden. In other districts the castes seem
to have disputed for precedence and not to have regularly intermar-
ried. In most areas the five castes occupied different villages or dif- [628]
ferent sections of large villages, seem to have had little communica-
tion in peacetime, and did not normally interdine. In war, however, [726]
soldiers of these different castes interdined freely and spent the night
in each others' homes. It is possible that sexual restrictions between
these castes were also relaxed in war, but this point is uncertain.

In each village there were normally some four to seven matrilineages 621
of the appropriate retainer caste. The separate households or property 613
groups within each lineage had the hereditary right, granted by the 564
king, to occupy stretches of garden land and to lease large plots of wet 566
paddy land on long-term tenure from the village landlord. The tenure 471
was called *kānam*; the tenant, a *kānakkaran*. In most villages the men of 427
retainer lineages also owed military service to their landlord, ultimately
on behalf of the king. (The military organization is discussed below.)
Retainers were called *adiyar*, a word equivalent to "vassals," of their
landlord. They participated in his household ceremonies and often
waited upon him. Women of retainer lineages could be summoned as
serving maids in the landlord's family; men, as bailiffs to collect the
landlord's rents and organize the labor of his serfs.

The Temple-Servant Castes In addition to the Nayars, other aristo- 564
cratic castes often lived in a village. These were the temple servants, 794
nowadays collectively called *Ambalavasis*. They are relevant to our
discussion because they sometimes married Nayar women. The highest
of these castes were the *Chakkyars* (or reciters of Puranic stories)
and the *Pushpagans* (or flower gatherers for temples), which had
patrilineal descent systems of the same type as the Nambudiris. They

Nayar: Central Kerala

313 621
564
162
613

lage; and bow makers, each with about one to ten houses per village. Tiyyars, astrologers, washermen, and barbers had double unilineal descent: localized patrilineages with dispersed exogamous matrilineal clans. Artisans and bow makers had patrilineages only.

The polluting castes worked for each other and for the higher castes. Tiyyars held land on a sub-tenure from landlords and Nayar tenants. Astrologers and artisans gave services to the higher castes, to each other, and to the Tiyyars, who ranked above them. Barbers worked for all the higher polluting castes but not for the "good" castes, who employed the Nayar barber. Washermen laundered for all the higher polluting castes but not regularly for the "good" castes, who employed the Nayar washerman. However, the low-caste washerman's lineage owed services to the "good" castes at death, menstruation, and childbirth. Bow makers served Nayars and Tiyyars. Each of the polluting castes was endogamous and interlined only within the caste.

THE LOWER POLLUTING CASTES

On the outskirts of the village, in separate small hamlets, lived the very low castes of Parayas and Pulayas. Parayas were a small caste of basket and umbrella makers. Two or three households had a village right to serve all castes above them. Pulayas were until 1850 the agricultural serfs of Nayars, temple servants, and Brahmans (Buchanan, 1807: 370-372). As highly polluting castes, Pulayas and Parayas were theoretically forbidden to approach the high castes within a distance of sixty-four feet. They might not enter the "good" area of the village or walk on the main paths.

OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Muslims, called Mappillas, were concentrated in the Zamorin's kingdom, where they followed patrilineal descent. In 1931 they formed about 15 per cent of Kerala's population. Their presence dates from the ninth century, when Arab traders began to make converts, probably mainly from the Tiyyars and the coastal caste of fishermen. From the Arabs and from these converts there sprang a flourishing trading community which increased greatly in the fourteenth century (Logan, 1951, I: 192-197). The Zamorins derived a large measure of their power from the Muslims through taxes and naval support (Ay-
yar, 1938: 54). Muslims lived mainly in the ports and at inland trading posts on the banks of rivers. They were partly outside the village ranking system, which had its basis in differential land rights, and were theoretically outside the Hindu religious hierarchy. Nevertheless, Muslims were in some contexts accorded a rank ritually and socially between that of Nayars and Tiyyars.

563
162
1797
1439

361
554

651 lords and tenants through indigenous Muslim middlemen. At that
439 time the middlemen appear to have paid the villagers directly in
cloth, metals, and luxury goods. Sumptuary laws confined the use of
[431] many imported goods to Brahmans, Nayars, and merchants. Other
strategic goods such as metals and cloth filtered down from the land-
lords and tenants to the lower castes in the form of customary gifts
at festivals.

439 During the period of European trade (1500 to 1792) markets and
436 cash transactions encroached further upon the subsistence economy of
villages. The kings prosecuted larger and larger wars and increasingly
paid their Nayar soldiers in cash, even though they continued to
muster them through the Nayars' "feudal lords."⁵ As the pepper and
coconut trade increased, new gardens came under cultivation and
landlords and tenants often sold their spices for cash. The Nayar
[566] retainers seem to have received most of this cash from the towns,
for as tenants they held the bulk of the village's garden lands as well
as receiving their payments in war. From about 1550, therefore, land-
lords, who wished to maintain control of the economy, had to develop
436 some means of extracting money from their tenants. Cash payments
439 thus became a regular feature of the *kānam* tenure (Logan, 1951, I:
• 427 cxxxi). The tenant periodically advanced a cash sum to the landlord
178 as a kind of forced loan, the interest on which was then set off against
the annual payment in kind. At the death of either landlord or tenant
13 per cent of the original sum was deducted from the loan as a
succession fee. The tenant might then repay this amount in cash or
revert to paying a larger share in kind. Later in the period cash
renewal fees seem to have been exacted by landlords every twelve
years. In some cases the tenant would prefer to surrender his land
or to sell his right and move his family to another village. Sales of
landlord rights, even (near the ports) to Europeans or Muslims, also
[425] increased. However, sale of either landlord or tenant rights remained
disreputable, lengthy, and hedged about with legal restrictions until
after the collapse of native rule (K. P. P. Menon, 1929: 309-310;
Logan, 1951, I: 597 *et seq.*; II: cxxv).

[171] * I use the term "feudal" here without precise definition. In many respects the
[631] political structure of the Central kingdoms was comparable with that of the
stronger Western European principalities such as Flanders and Normandy in the
second half of the eleventh century. There was centralized control of the judiciary,
of armies, trade, and coinage, but within each principality subordinate lords re-
tained minor judicial powers and owned domains and private armies (Stephenson,
1942: 80-92).

Kathleen Gough

336

342

tertaining friends, or sleeping when they were not visiting their wives.

[343]

A cowshed a few yards from the residential buildings completed the arrangements in a normal retainer homestead. In village headmen's and chiefly households whose women often had Brahman husbands a separate building with its own kitchen was set aside to entertain the men when they visited their wives.

342

556

[357]

The buildings and outer courtyard were surrounded by a shady garden of coconut, jack, cashew, and mango trees. Chiefs and village headmen had a private bathing pool with stone steps round it in their own gardens. Retainers more often bathed in the large public bathing pools attached to the temples and reserved for "clean" castes of the village. Men and women bathed and swam daily on opposite sides of the pool.

[312]

[555]

357

613

In the southwest corner of the garden an open space was set aside as the property group's cremation ground, entered only at funerals.

[764]

[776]

[782]

[825]

In another corner was a dense shrubbery devoted to the snake gods of the group. Offerings were made there to small stone images of cobras, and if real cobras appeared they were regarded as manifestations of these deities.

A high bamboo fence surrounded the whole establishment. It was entered through a wooden gatehouse within which armed men might sit on guard in time of war.

592

241

427

613

433

Economic Activities The property group obtained almost all of its subsistence from garden and paddy lands held on tenure from the village landlord and cultivated by Tiyyar sub-tenants or by Pulaya serfs. The property group surrendered part of its produce in kind as dues to the landlord. It retained part for maintenance, stored part for repayment to its serfs as daily subsistence, and gave portions twice annually to the village servant households. Tiyyar tenants retained enough for their own needs, but gave the bulk of their produce to their Nayar masters. Increasingly during the period of European trade the property group also sold spices and coconuts to Muslim middlemen in exchange for cash or cloth. The cash was used to buy brass and silver vessels, gold ornaments and jewelry, and other luxury goods from the towns. The property group gave some cloth to its serfs and tenants at festivals once a year.

[439]

[432]

[431]

613

592

[465]

The karanavan managed all these transactions and controlled the group's estate. He might allocate specific tasks of management to juniors, but no payment was made on behalf of the group, no crops were sold, and no goods were consumed without his consent. Junior men serving in the king's wars received small daily cash sums on an

Nayan North Kerala

387

marks that "When a high-caste Nayar becomes ripe, he turns into a king."

Low productivity and poor communications perhaps made the exaction of tribute more difficult than in Central Kerala, and this fact, plus the uncertain nature of trade, made the local rulers perennially short of funds. This is probably the reason why, although they were trained for warfare in gymnasia in their villages, Nayars were not regularly conscripted into a national army. Instead, they merely fought sporadically on behalf of local chiefs. Further, chiefs and village headmen were insufficiently strong to bring all the land under their control. Their domains were larger than those of Nayar commoners, but most commoner Nayar property groups were independent small landlords in their own right within their villages. Since they were not full-time warriors and since in many areas they had no serfs, Nayar commoners also did part of their own cultivation on their small estates. Part of their land, however, they leased to Tiyyar tenants as in Central Kerala. The polluting castes of village servants had the same rights and spatial distribution as in Central Kerala. In general, the economic processes of reciprocity and redistribution in villages proceeded in a comparable manner.

As independent warrior-cultivators, the Nayar commoners were not divided into separate castes of retainers owing allegiance as vassals and *kānam* tenants to different kinds of lords. Most villages were nominally under Nayar village headmen. In villages of the Kottayam and Kadattunad kingdoms, both the headman's lineage and those of the Nayar commoners belonged to a large caste called Nambiar, who appear to have intermarried throughout the kingdom. Although of the same general caste as commoners, and not forbidden by religious law from intermarrying equally with commoners, Nambiar village headmen's lineages tended, however, to intermarry only with each other or to take wives only from the commoners, occasionally giving their own women in marriage to chiefs or Brahmans. Chiefs claimed a higher caste rank as Samantan Nambiar, and royalty as Kshattriyas. These aristocratic lineages conducted hypergamous marriages with each other and with Nambudiris as in Central Kerala.

Judicial processes were somewhat less centralized than in the Central kingdoms. At least in theory, grave crimes and civil disputes in urban centers seem to have been tried in royal courts, but most civil disputes inland were apparently tried by local chiefs. Under the chiefs, caste assemblies of neighborhoods took care of crimes against religious law as in the Central kingdoms. Murder among Nayars

175
648
634
635

621
634
651
701
622

613
592
423
241
427
564
437

564
621
613
582

692

000

613 THE PROPERTY GROUP

564 The property group, a segment of the lineage, was among Nambiar
422 commoners of roughly the same size and internal composition as
423 among the Nayar retainers of Central Kerala. Its members jointly
owned both movable and immovable property in the same manner.
Its karanavan managed the estate, had legal guardianship over mem-
bers, and was legally responsible for them to the local caste assembly
and to the chief. All Nayar property groups appear to have owned some
garden and rice lands as *jenmis*. In addition some leased land on
[427] kânam tenure from chiefs, royalty, or Brahmans if any were present
in their village. A property group whose membership was expanding
might bring under cultivation waste land belonging to the chief on a
tenure known as *kurikânam*. The tenant had the right of occupancy
for twelve years without paying rent; he then paid an annual share of
produce to the landlord. The improvements he made (trees, houses,
etc.) were his own and he could not be evicted without compensation
for them.

613 Residence was ideally *avunculocal*. Plural marriages for women were
591 forbidden, and a man normally brought his wife to live with him on
his matrilineal estate for the duration of the marriage. This mode of
residence was apparently related to population density and to the
sexual division of labor. Some duolocal marriages did exist between
partners living in nearby houses in the same village. However, houses
and villages were so scattered that most men would have had dif-
ficulty in maintaining a visiting relationship with a wife. Matriloc-
[907] al residence was also disadvantageous because men did much of the
work of cultivation on their own estates, were required to defend their
estates against invaders, and were mobilized by the chiefs in war
on the basis of property-group membership. A few junior men lived
matrilocally for short periods, but the karanavan and most of the
adult men lived on their own estates.

613 In the relatively small property groups of commoners, the dwelling
592 group was thus often an avunculocal extended family. It would
596 comprise a group of brothers, their wives and immature children,
their adult sisters' sons, and the wives and small children of these
men. Divorced or widowed women born into the property group also
had the right of permanent residence there, and married women born
into it might return to live there for several weeks or months when
they wished.

In the larger property groups of some commoners, village head-
men, and chiefs, the main ancestral house might be reserved for

Nayar North Kerala

391

divorced or widowed women of the group and their children, together with temporarily divorced men or elderly widowers. The karanavan, his wife, and his immature children would occupy a wing of the ancestral house or a separate building in the same courtyard. Married men of the group would live with their wives and children in separate houses, all on the matrilineal estate. The karanavan would then allocate separate gardens and rice fields for usufruct to each married man. A junior would often hold such land on kanam tenure from the taravad as a whole. The karanavan would retain a larger portion of the estate for his own maintenance and that of unmarried persons living in the ancestral house. In any case he retained ultimate management of the whole property and might retract portions of it at will. If, however, a junior man leased new land from the taravad on kurikanam tenure, the improvements he made on it might, by custom although not by law, become the separate property of his mother's matrilineal descendants. If, later, the whole property was divided between major segments of the property group, each branch might take as its share the fields and gardens on which improvements had been made by male members of that branch. In the larger aristocratic taravads one or two sthanam estates might be set aside for the men immediately junior to the karanavan. Their holders managed such estates with greater independence than the plots allocated to more junior men. All cultivation was carried on with the aid of Tiyyar laborers attached by hereditary right to the taravad. In some cases also plots were given on sub-tenure to Tiyyar cultivating tenants in the same manner as in Central Kerala.

A man might also—at least in the nineteenth century—with the consent of his own and his wife's karanavan, lease land on kanam or kurikanam tenure from his wife's taravad. A few junior men actually went to live matrilocally in the wife's ancestral house or in a separate house which they built on the wife's ancestral estate. Houses and improvements to land provided by a husband in this way customarily became the separate property of the wife and her matrilineal descendants. Land on which such improvements had been made also normally passed to the wife's descendants as their share when the whole property of the wife's taravad was finally divided. Matrilocal residence by a junior man was rare and could always be objected to by the man's karanavan if his services were needed at home. However, a man who was himself a karanavan had considerable freedom to build a house and develop new gardens on his wife's taravad estate, which would later enrich his wife's matrilineal descendants. If

613
592

613
423
592

[429]

613
427
423
591

[428]

423
613
421
591 the wife's taravād was near his own he might divide his time between his own ancestral house and the private house he had built for his wife and her descendants on her ancestral estate.

613 Although this was contrary to customary law, some men also managed to give jenmam land outright to a wife and her matrilineal descendants, thus founding a new branch taravād through the wife.

431
423 This practice greatly increased in the nineteenth century, when new gardens were continually being developed on former waste land and when land became freely marketable. In 1896, indeed, a law was finally passed enabling a man's wife and children to inherit half of his self-acquired intestate property (Malabar Marriage Act, 1896).

[671]
[428] Occasional gifts of land to the wife and her descendants were, however, known long before the British period, although they were against the law. At the political level, kings and chiefs occasionally gave large domains, together with the office of chief or village headman, to their wives' matrilineal descendants. The chiefships of both Nileswaram and Kadattunad are said to have been formed in this way by gifts from Kolattiri kings before the fourteenth century; both later became virtually independent kingdoms (Logan, 1951, I: 343; Ayyar, 1938: 4). Many smaller territories and political offices were similarly bequeathed during the period of European trade. On a smaller scale, the karanavan of a Nambiar taravād sometimes managed to take out a portion of the fallow jenmam land of his own taravād, cultivate it, and give it to his wife and her descendants. Naturally, such gifts, which were in no sense a part of acknowledged lawful custom, led to disputes with the donor's matrilineal kin and sometimes, in the next generation, to feuds between lineages.

[578]
[627] Gifts of land or improvements by a man to his wife's descendants led to the existence of branch property groups, called *tāvari-taravāds*, within the main property group. After the donor's death the wife's karanavan might manage such a small estate on behalf of her branch, retaining the income separately for her and her children. More commonly, the donor's eldest son became the karanavan of the *tāvari* property, while the branch also continued to receive its ancestral dues out of the property of the taravād as a whole. When a stirpital division of the whole taravād occurred, this branch might claim both its separate estate and its share of the ancestral property. If the donor had been a chief and the gift was large, the branch to which it was given might, however, choose to leave its taravād without taking a share of the ancestral estate and to found a new taravād home on its new land. *Tāvari-taravāds* were, however, rare among commoners

family to compass the death of a member of the slayer's family.⁶²⁷ This custom was called *kudippaka* (literally, *house feud*), or in an abbreviated form, *kuduppu*. One curious fact connected with this custom was that the chieftain of the district intervened when a man was slain, and the body of the deceased was by him taken to his enemy's house, and the corpse and the house were burnt together. It is understood that an out-house was usually selected for this purpose, but it was a common phrase to say—

'the slain rests in the yard of the slayer.'

"Again when mortal offence was given by one man to another, a solemn contract used to be entered into before the chieftain of the locality to fight a *duel*, the chieftain himself being the umpire. Large sums (up to a thousand fanams or two hundred and fifty rupees) used to be deposited as the battle-wager, and these sums formed one source (*ankam*) of the chieftain's revenue, and the right to levy them was sometimes transferred along with other privileges appertaining to the tenure of the soil. A preparation and training (it is said) for twelve years preceded the battle in order to qualify the combatants in the use of their weapons. The men who fought were not necessarily the principals in the quarrel—they were generally their champions. It was essential that one should fall, and so both men settled all their worldly affair before the day of combat."

The origin of the duo-decimal period is obscure, but to this day it obtains in Malabar (and in Malabar only) in relation to all agricultural affairs. The land, in contradistinction to the rest of the Presidency (as a rule), is the absolute property of the landholders—the whole of Malabar is; the landholders let out their land under certain conditions for periods of twelve years. This is the ordinary period of tenure; now a days, much of the land is leased informally on a yearly tenure. Tenants must renew their right to possession of their land every twelve years. The subject of land tenure in Malabar is a very extensive one, and we will not discuss it, resting satisfied with having noted the observance of the twelve yearly cycle in connection with it. It is supposed to be governed by the cycle of Jupiter.*

* Friar Jordanus, Bishop of Quilon in the 14th century, said that people make a vow, and to fulfil it cut off their own head before an idol.

Barbosa says that the king of Quilaene or Coliacaud (Calicut) after reigning 12 years, always sacrificed himself to an idol in this way."

"Madras Manual of Administration," vol. iii, page 643.

Nayar
Tiyyar

36

E. KATHLEEN GOUGH

Rajas to assist at their ceremonies. Kolattiri women married Koil Tamburan or Nambūdiri men, and Kolattiri men Samantan Nambiar or Nambiar women. In the Kadattunad lineage, which once owed fealty to Kolattiri as an ordinary chiefly lineage, the *tali* was tied by Kolattiri princes. Women of the lineage married Kolattiri or Nambūdiri men, and men, chiefly women of or village headmen's lineages of their kingdoms.

It is clear that, at least for the 'ordinary' Nambiar who married almost exclusively with each other, the *tali*-rite was no more than an initiation ceremony giving the girl the status of a married woman. It is fitting that the *tali* should not be tied by an *enangan*, for, polyandry being prohibited, the girls of a lineage were not married collectively to the local group as a whole. Since the *sambandham* union was permanent, the husband's sexual rights exclusive, and the father accorded legal, ritual, and social rights, it is difficult to explain this rite in terms of social function. It is true, of course, that like all Nayar rites it had the function of identifying the Nayars as a group with customs distinctive from those of other groups. It may also be possible to argue that it gave ritual recognition to the overlordship of Nambūdiris. It was not, however, as in South Malabār, closely in keeping with the political and economic systems, either in the kingdom or the village. Nambūdiri landlords were few, and many Nayars would have to call for the rite Nambūdiris of distant villages to whom they had no relationship as retainers.

Similarly, the *tali*-rite in the Kolattiri lineage seems to have resulted less from the lineage's bond to the Koil Tamburans, than the reverse: for, we are to believe informants, the Koil Tamburans were brought from Travancore expressly to perform the *tali*-rite and assist at other ceremonies of the Kolattiri lineage. I am not prepared to state that the North Malabar *tali*-rite had no other social function, since I never saw it and the evidence is incomplete. It seems, however, that certain aspects of the rite, both in north and south, cannot be explained in terms of social function but only in terms of psychological motivations. This I defer until I have discussed the place of this rite in the kinship systems of North and South Malabar Tiyyars.

PART III. THE TIYYAR KINSHIP SYSTEM AND *Tali*-RITE IN NORTH MALABAR

THE TIYYARS FARM LAND leased on short-term tenures from Nayars and live in the low-caste quarters of the same villages. In this area they are matrilineal. Like Nayars, they were organized into *taras*, the hereditary headman (*Tandan*) of the *tara* being responsible to the *desavari* for the administration of caste law among Tiyyars and the lower castes.¹

Each *tara* might contain ten to twelve Tiyyar lineages and one each of Tiyyar washermen (*Vannāns*, called *Mannāns* in the south) and barbers (*Kāvuttiyyans*, called *Vāthiis* in the south). The Tiyyar lineage, like the Nayar, is exogamous, is united by birth and death pollutions, the worship of a lineage goddess, and snake-worship, and is divided into property-groups each containing a sibling group together with the children and maternal grandchildren of the sisters. The Tiyyars, like the Nayars, have dispersed matrilineal exogamous clans. In this area (but not in South Malabar) Tiyyar men may hypergamously marry women of the Tiyyar barber (but not the washerman) caste.

Tiyyars, like Nayars, are predominantly virilocal. Unlike Nayars, Tiyyar men, having little ancestral property, may remain with the father and build a house on land leased from Nayars near the father's dwelling-group. Though filiation is officially matrilineal, and children retain rights in any land or houses their matrilineal group may own, the local descent-group, persisting over three to four generations, is therefore often patrilineal. Polyandry is forbidden.

¹ I have no information on the *enangan* institution of North Malabar Tiyyars. De Aiyappan's (1944, *passim*) discussion of the Tiyyar *enangan* system seems, from my knowledge of Tiyyars, to apply only to patrilineal Tiyyars of South Malabar. In Kottayam informants do not remember the institution which, if it existed, must have died out thirty to fifty years ago.

Tiyyar

[North Malabar]

FEMALE INITIATION RITES ON THE MALABAR COAST

57

Polyandry is forbidden.
 polygyny more common than among Nayars. Symmetrical cross-cousin marriage is encouraged, the mother's brother's son being the rightful husband of a girl. Divorce, however, appears to be much more common than among Nayars and the domestic group less stable, especially in poor families.

For the post-puberty marriage ceremony the bridegroom comes with his parents and elders to the house of the bride. This contrasts with Nayar marriage, where the youth is accompanied by age-mates, the father and maternal uncles being prohibited from attending. This difference reflects the fact that despite virilocal residence and the comparative infrequency of divorce, North Malabar Nayar marriage is theoretically, as in the south, a contract between individuals as sexual partners and not between lineages. Moreover, the absence of the maternal uncles reflects the sexual jealousy between proximal generations in a Nayar lineage. Among Tiyyars, marriage is primarily a contract between families, a domestic arrangement for procuring food and bringing up children, as well as a sexual tie. The bridegroom's father and *karanavan* jointly give gold to the goldsmith who makes earrings for the bride and places them in the tops of her ears. These rings are the mark of a married woman and are removed at divorce or death.

The feast at the bride's house is paid for jointly by the two parties. After it is over, the bridegroom's *karanavan* pays a bride-price in *panams* (old-fashioned Malayali coins) to the *karanavan* of the bride. This sum is called *kdam*, the word used for the sum paid by a Nayar or Tiyyar tenant to his landlord at the start of a period of tenure, nowadays fixed at twelve years. The interest on the *kdam* sum is then set off against the annual rent, and returned to the tenant if the property is returned at the end of the stipulated period. The Tiyyar marriage is thus, as Aiyappan (1944, p. 91) says, 'in theory a temporary depositing of a girl by her natural guardian amidst another group from whom a security is received and also an undertaking to take care of her'. The bride's party in return pay a dowry of jewellery and vessels. The bridegroom presents one loin-cloth to the bride and another to her mother. The couple are blessed by elders and depart to the bridegroom's house.

The Tiyyar marriage, therefore, is better defined legally than the Nayar. The *kdam* sum (which is of nominal value, in Kottayam fixed at 13½ *panams* or 3 to 5 rupees¹ and paid in the old coins long after their use as currency died out) is, it seems, a symbolic purchase of the husband's *ius in uxorem*. While this persists, he must maintain his wife. Should he lose it by the wife's adultery, his *kdam* sum is returned and his wife goes home with her dowry. In theory, he does not acquire *ius in genitricem* in his wife: this, as in all matrilineal societies, remains with her natal kin. Similarly, the father need not by law maintain his children, though he often does so in fact. These may at any time be returned to their *karanavan*.

The Tiyyar Tali-Rite. Since the Tiyyar *tali*-rite died out about twenty years ago, it has been better described in previous literature than by my own informants. I therefore summarize Anantha Krishna Iyer's (1909-12, I, p. 288), Thurston & Rangachari's (1909, VII, pp. 77-9) and Aiyappan's (1944, pp. 159-62) accounts, and then add that of my informants.

The rite must be performed before puberty, on pain of disgrace to the girl's family, and, in ancient times, excommunication from caste. The day was fixed by the astrologer and the ceremony held in the girl's matrilineal ancestral house. The girl was taken to the middle room of the house and secluded for three days as if she had menstruated. Like a menstruous woman, she must abstain from meat and condiments and must not see a tree, a plant, a man, a crow, a dog, or a cat. On the fourth day she bathed in the local pool. At the pool, her brother planted an arrow with its point up, to drive away evil spirits. After bathing, the girl cut a

¹Thurston & Rangachari report that the north Malabar *kdam* sum is 41 *panams*; Aiyappan, however, places it between 8 and 90 *panams*. In Kottayam the bridegroom's mother's brother gives 11½ *panams* to the bride's mother's brother and a *panam* to her mother's brother's wife.

and one with less than that number was called a *Désavdshi*.
 There were in those days no taxes levied from the people, and
 the chief from the Rajas down to the *Désavishi* possessed
 demesne lands for their support which were cultivated either
 by themselves or leased to *kudiyāns* or tenants; but the follow-
 ing were the chief sources of income, based upon feudal rights
 and privileges. The rulers levied custom duties upon exports
 and imports, taxes upon houses of fishermen, tradesmen and
 professional men. Criminal fines went to fill their coffers, and
 succession duties were levied upon the estates of deceased per-
 sons, especially those who held offices of State or rights over
 land. Outcast women were made a two-fold source of profit.
 Lewd adulterous women were made over to the chiefs with
 a premium for the trouble of looking after them, and the chiefs
 used in turn to sell the women to foreign merchants as slaves
 or wives to *Chettis*. The estates of persons who died without
 heirs were escheated, nor could an heir be adopted without the
 Raja's consent, for which a fee was generally levied. Protection
 fees from strangers and merchants were levied under various
 names and customary presents were the ruler's dues on occa-
 sions of feast or funeral. Wrecks were his perquisites, and
 various animals his monopoly. Concerning the former, Marco
 Polo wrote about the kingdom of Eli, "And you must know
 that if any ship enters the estuary and anchors when she
 has been bound for some other port, they seize her and
 plunder the cargo. They say that you are bound some-
 where else, and it is God that sent you hither to us, so we
 have a right to all your goods, and think it no sin to act
 thus. This naughty custom prevails all over the Provinces
 of India, to wit, that if a ship be driven by a stress of
 weather into some other port than that to which it is bound, it
 is sure to be plundered. But if a ship came bound originally
 to the place, they received it with all honour and gave it
 protection." The custom of the taking of ships and cargoes
 lasted down to recent times, until the English factory at Telli-
 cherry entered into agreements with three of the country-
 powers for the exemption of English vessels from such seizures.
 Among the animals that became the property of the Raja
 were cows with three or five dugs, cattle that has killed a man
 or other animals, cattle with a white spot near the corner of

Since this is a matter of all-India policy, the State Government should press the Central Government for an early action on this. ^{433*}
245
[427]

2.100 Tea estate lands are leased to growers by the Government. Most estates hold lands in considerable excess of areas which actually bear tea. Government should compel the lessees to undertake planting tea in all the suitable areas; failing this, the surplus lands may be taken back from the lessees by the Government.

2.101 A programme of replantation of at least 10,000 acres per year would be necessary during the Third and Fourth Plan periods, specially to compensate for the past neglect. Fresh leases need not be granted for this purpose as there are vast uncropped areas adjacent to tea estates in the areas already leased. Pressure, inducement, incentives in the form of replantation loans and the supply of materials may be employed to achieve the desired results. Estimates of cost of bringing an acre up to the bearing stage vary from Rs. 2,150 to Rs. 3,650 per acre. Adopting the estimate of the Tea Planters Association at Rs. 2,500 per acre, the total investment necessary to raise 10,000 acres of new plantings per year for the next 10 years would be of the order of Rs. 25 crores.

2.102 *Size of the Plantations:* In 1957, there were 282 estates in Kerala. The average size of tea gardens in the State is 350 acres. However, about 50 per cent of the estates were less than 200 acres in area. For economic functioning of a tea estate, it is necessary to have a modern tea processing unit (generally known as a tea factory) attached to the garden. Different estimates show that to be an economic unit, a tea factory needs 822,000 lbs. (about 10,000 maunds) of green leaves a year and to produce this quantity anywhere from 250 to 300 acres of tea acreage would be needed. If this is accepted as a norm, it may be said that about half the tea estates in Kerala are uneconomic. This is indeed a serious problem, since the economic functioning of an estate as well as the quality of tea produced depends on the size and the type of processing machinery employed. An increase in the size of all the plantations with an area below 250 acres is necessary. Long term replantation loans and fresh leases of land, if available, are suggested as measures to correct the existing imbalance. ⁴²³

Rubber

2.103 Kerala holds almost complete monopoly in the sphere of rubber production in the country. Kottayam has the largest concentration of rubber acreage in India. During 1958, Kerala produced 22,159 tons of rubber valued at Rs. 7.69 crores, out of a total all-India production of 25,000 tons. The rubber plantations also employ a large labour force of approximately 80,000 persons. ^{433*}
249
[464]

2.104 Soil, climate and other natural conditions found in Kerala are quite well suited to the growth of rubber plants except that rainfall is not as well distributed over the year as in some other rubber growing areas of the world, such as Malaya and Ceylon. This factor has had a somewhat adverse effect on the yields, which might otherwise have been higher than the present level of 294 lbs. per acre. [132]

2.105 During the last decade there has been a sharp increase in the area under rubber. Between 1951 and 1958 it increased by 90 per cent, that is, from 141,760

as ginger and chillies, palm sugar, mangoes and bananas, betel leaf, tea 105
and coffee. There are two main paddy (unhusked rice) harvests, the 241
kanni in September and until November, depending on the type of rice
planted and where, and the *magaram* in January and February.

A system of land-tenure and tenancy very special to Kerala is in ex- 105
istence in the state and its principal characteristics may be summed up 427 ●
as follows. Freehold land owners are called *janmis* and they are entitled 423
to the absolute proprietorship of the land; they may mortgage or lease 104
it to anyone as they wish. They are themselves nearly always non-
cultivating. The first kind of tenure to which they may resort is called
kanam and he who holds the lease is known as the *kanamdhar*. This is a
curious type of arrangement between landlord and tenant, by which the
latter deposits a certain sum with the *janmi*, who in return pays interest
on the amount as if it were a loan. The *kanamdhar* then has the right to
work the land or to lease it out to someone else. Every year he pays
rent, an adjusted sum as the interest received from the landlord is de-
ducted. Once every twelve years, a so-called renewal fee is paid by the
tenant equal to three times the annual rent, and this gives him the right
of possession for a further twelve years. Should he wish to give up the
lease, the original deposit will be returned to him by the *janmi*. Most
kanamdars sub-let and do not cultivate the land themselves.

The *kanamdars* often lease out the land as a *kanam* tenure too; but 104
if they do not, it is as a *verumpattam* lease that they do so. This is a
simple affair held for one year at a time, by which the tenant pays a
fixed rent, or for several years, in which case it is called a customary
verumpattam, and a renewal fee then becomes necessary, payable be- 243
tween five and twelve years. This lease is used only for paddy fields.
Tenants of this category often sub-lease in the same way to others, who
cultivate the land either themselves, or, more usually, employ labourers 466
to do so. These labourers are of two kinds, free and tied. The former 464
are coolies hiring themselves out for wages, while the others are agrari-
an farmhands who receive only board, lodging and clothing from the
master responsible for them.

Customary *verumpattam* tenure of palm gardens for the production 104
of coconuts or arecanuts is called *kuzhikanam*. The twelve year renewal
fee is equal to the amount made on the garden in the last year and a
half of the lease. Virgin and waste land, which nevertheless always has
a *janmi* somewhere, is also let out on this type of tenure. The land
owner has the right to evict the tenant if he has made no improvement
of the land during his period of lease. House-sites occupied by tenants

105 also have to be paid for, if they do not wish to be summarily evicted by
 427 a land owner who simply tolerates their settling down on his land. This is an ordinary lease, like a *verumpattam*, but is called a *kudiyiruppu*.

Tenants were formerly at a great disadvantage vis a vis the *janmi*, as the latter was at liberty to evict them on the slightest pretext. The Malabar Tenancy Act of 1930, by protecting the tenant, and restricting the cases in which eviction is possible (such as the non-payment of rent for instance, or necessity for the land owner to have some land to cultivate himself), especially of the *kanamdar*, has made this a thing of the past. Dissatisfaction with the existing conditions of land ownership and land-tenure continues, however, and the present tendency goes so far as to want to protect the interests of the *verumpattam* tenants to the detriment of the *kanamdars* and *janmis* and even, in the last resort as we shall see, of the landless, agrarian labourers who constitute the vast army of the Kerala agrarian proletariat.

105 It is difficult to generalize about the distribution of agricultural roles
 423 and interests among the various castes and communities in the state. Schematically, it can be said, however, that generally Nambudri Brahmins are *janmis*, since, as mythology has it, Parasu Raman gave them the land in perpetual enjoyment. Commenting on this, one of my interpreters assured me that this was not mere idle belief. It was a fact, giving the Brahmins an unequivocal title to the land, in spite of there being "no legal document" confirming them in their ownership. Many Nayars, including Kshattriyas such as the rajas of Cochin and Travancore, Samantans such as the Zamorin, and some Tiyas and Moplas, are also owners of large tracts of land.

105 *Kanamdars* are usually recruited among the well-to-do Nayars and
 569 Tiyas, but also among the big Mopla families. Other Moslems are
 429 *verumpattam* tenants, as are the majority of the Tiyas. These of course
 1993 used to follow their traditional profession of *toddy* (fermented palm
 1963 juice) tapping, but with the introduction of prohibition in the former
 1964 Madras State, they have had to give it up, and mainly hire themselves out as labourers. Others who have always hired themselves out in this way, as an immemorial caste occupation, are the Cherumas and Pulayas, some free, but the vast majority tied to the land. Many Moplas, also, have no other means of subsistence.

105 The aborigines in Kerala continue their wild life of beggars, food-
 563 gatherers or primitive forest-clearers and agriculturalists. Some are ad-
 463 dicted to witchcraft as are also members of some of the artisan castes,
 1954 and their activities give Kerala a strange, mysterious atmosphere of im-
 ponderable evil, the reputation of which is great
 outside its boundaries.

* 595 [114] With the Thandans and the Tiyas (Tiyas) of north Cochin, there were happily none of these difficulties, and I was able to study them at my ease. On the 23rd of July, 1939, I paid my first visit to Kerala when I drove to Palghat from Ootacamund in the Nilgiris and went to a Tiya house in Lakkidi in Walluvanad with an interpreter. The Tiyas we met that day were two men, brothers, who shared a wife. When we entered the yard of their broken-down palm leaf house, she was sitting bare-breasted, suckling a little boy whom she told us was hers. The [61] two men, whose names I did not ascertain, told us that they followed *marumakkathayam*, which was surprising. In those days, I knew too little about Kerala to ask them if they came from north Malabar, as they probably did. But I have since heard from a blacksmith family which I visited at the same place on the 12th of November 1949, that they had indeed come from north Malabar, and that this was the reason why they were matrilineal. Their polyandry, on the other hand, was correlated with the economic plight in which they found themselves, and they had taken to it because it was the customary way to solve such difficulties with their fellows of the same caste in the south. They had no property and told us that they worked as paid labourers. For the house, they [42] paid four annas a year to a local Brahmin landlord. They said, nevertheless, that polyandry was dying out and that the Nayars, for instance, did not practise it any longer. Theirs was obviously a sporadic instance of a matrilineal Tiya family from north Malabar in which the wife was being shared by two brothers in a south Malabar taluk, where fraternal polyandry prevails. It would be unwise to make any generalizations from this as it was, I think, quite an exceptional and probably isolated case.

On the 25th and 26th of October 1949, together with my interpreters, I visited a large Thandan household, about two miles east of Ottapalam. The family living there were called Appayl Watakkah, and they [35] belonged to the Appayl *tarawad*. The buildings in the compound consisted of one large mansion with a courtyard in front, at the end of which was a smaller house. Cattle and some dogs roamed about in the courtyard, where paddy was also drying. In the background, the green plantain, papaya and areca nut palms, contrasted sharply with the red soil and the laterite stones from which the houses were built, and the soaring trunks of tall coconut trees stood out, here and there.

* 596 [35] We met the *karanavan*, called Raman, a man of forty eight, wearing only a piece of cotton from the waist down. He was wrinkled and partly bald, but very amiable and helpful when it came to questioning him. On the first day, we spoke in general terms to him about the Thandan

* 595
601 could get Panju to say at first was that she "did not look after us enough". However, when I insisted, I heard that she did not satisfy them sexually, which again might be either that Ramon got the lion's share of the marriage or that the two younger men did not find their elder brother's wife very attractive. Anyhow, they asked their maternal uncle (their father had died in the meantime) to find them another wife. After a show of resistance in which he said that it was not right and that they should remain with Kuniyama as tradition dictated, their mother's brother again gave in and got Nani for them; they married her when they were twenty and fifteen respectively. They were now forty and thirty five, and their common wife was thirty five. They had put up a separate household, to leave Raman and Sankara in the main building, and theirs was the smaller house on the other side of the yard, wholly within the same compound, however, so that the *tarawad* property was not completely torn asunder.

423 The land upon which the family lived was theirs, and not rented. After the death of their father, their mother inherited it, and when she died, it was divided up between the sons. Mayadi was also gone, but Raman junior, his son, and the four surviving brothers, Raman senior, Sankara, Panju and Narayana, each received one fifth of the whole. There was a meeting in the big house, they told me, about a year after the death of their mother (they presumably inherited the property undivided until then), and it took them three days to come to an agreement. Influential neighbours, the elders of the *tarawad* and the two brothers-in-law, Kunyadi and Maniken, also attended. The whole property, paddy fields, cattle, grain and seeds, agricultural tools, implements, the house and the household requisites and furniture, was evaluated in money and divided into five equal shares. Panju and Narayana did not split their shares; they kept the two fifths they received undivided, as they constituted a polyandrous household. The women did not inherit anything because they had been married off to others. Women among the Thandans can inherit from their parents, I heard, if there are no male heirs.

* 595 On the 27th of October 1949, I visited a Tiya (Thiyya) polyandrous family at Kadevelur in Tallapilli taluk of north Cochin. These people
● 427 were *kanam* tenants of a Nambudri Brahmin, to whom they paid thirty rupees a year in rent, plus eight hundred measures of rice per crop.¹

[804] ¹ I was told eight hundred *parahs*, but this is hardly possible as: 1 Cochin *parah* = 10 *edangalls* = 40 *nallis* = 1,720 *tolas*; as 42½ Cochin *tolas* = 1 lb., 1 Cochin *parah* = c. 40½ lbs. Eight hundred *parahs* would then = 40½ × 800 = 32,400 lbs. The measure may have been a smaller one, an *edangali* or even a *nall*.

*595 We went first to the house of some rich Tiyas, in which we had been told that there were three elderly men living in polyandry. It was a large mansion standing in a well-kept compound, and we met one of the members of the older generation as well as a young man. When we asked them about their polyandry, they both shook their heads and protested that we had been "misinformed". Nobody in their family practised this marital custom, they said, although they admitted that the previous generation had done so. Since there was nothing we could do about it, and it would be useless to argue with such people, we went on. However, from the next house that we reached, we heard that what we had previously been told was correct and that these men did not tell us the truth. Because they were well off, they liked to play up at being "progressive", we heard, and therefore denied their polyandry which was nevertheless a fact.

[594] The two tumbled-down, thatched houses which we next visited, stood in a very small compound in which plantain and coconut trees grew. Two old men, one very bald, and an aged lady, her flat bosoms hanging down dismally on her bare chest, came out to greet us. They were very hospitable and kind, and offered us fresh coconut milk from a nut, to drink. The younger of the two men, Raman, aged sixty five, volunteered to give us any information that we wished to obtain from him.

*595
601 He told us that he and his two elder brothers, Shangu and Mundon, had been married to Chaki, the white haired old lady, for fifty years. Shangu, the eldest, had now been dead for three years, but Mundon, three years his junior, was alive at just seventy one. He was the other man, with the bald head. They lived in the larger of the two thatched houses. Kandapan, their third son, who was married to Lakshmi and had a small boy three years old, lived in the smaller house. They had only been married for four years, since "the last renewal".

427 This remark, it seemed, was an allusion to the rent. The latter consisted of a *kurikanam* lease, for which they paid three rupees a year (or the equivalent in bananas, they said), and a renewal fee of six rupees every twelve years. They had paid the latter four years ago, and it had gone to their *janmi*, a Nambudri Brahmin whose *illam* was called Granghat *illam*. By profession they were toddy tappers, but since the introduction of prohibition in Madras State, they had been deprived of their livelihood. It seemed that there was an inner belt of some miles within Cochin territory in which the distilling and sale of liquor was prohibited in order to prevent smuggling over the border, and that they, since their house was situated ten miles inland, were affected by this regulation.

593
463
655

POLYANDRY OF THE THANDANS, KAMMALANS, ETC.

187

We still had time that afternoon, to drive back into the village of Perumpillav and to interview some more polyandrous Tiyas. We drove to a Tiya house to have a talk with a man, a woman and a boy who confirmed to us that they belonged to families practising polyandry. 595*

The man was called Tami; he was fifty six years old and worked as a coolie. He had the *Kudiyiruppu* lease of a house for which he paid three rupees a year to a Mopla, Melethil Kunyuni Haidaros. The latter was himself the *verumpattamdar* of a *janmi* called Cheralayam Nambidi. (I was unable to find out if he was a Brahmin, an Ambalavasi or a Samantan; with the title *Nambidi* which he bore, he could have been any one of the three, but I suspect that he was a Brahmin, as this is the caste which owns the land in north Cochin.) [115] [420] [423]

Tami's household name was Kanadiwalapil, which was also that of his *tarawad*. He and his brother, Narayan, were married to Chidu, alias Sri Devi, a woman now aged fifty. The younger brother was his junior by twenty one years and had been married as second husband to their common wife when he was only five years old. There were five children, of whom the two eldest were girls, now married off elsewhere. All the boys were unmarried, and worked with their fathers as coolies. 595* 601

I found the informant extremely difficult to question. He was continually contradicting himself, and pretended that he knew no names nor ages. Thus I was unable to discover the name of his wife's *tarawad*, how many children his second daughter had had, and the ages of his two eldest sons, Velu and Kutan. I give the genealogy as I struggled to make it, in Table 7, but I fear that it is sadly incomplete and perhaps not even reliable. It was nevertheless of interest to find out something, however little, from a Tiya polyandrous labourer. [115]

We next turned to the woman. She was accompanied by her twelve year old son, Balakrishnan, and at once showed herself, in striking contrast to her predecessor, to be bright and helpful. This was a great relief after the previous painful session. I was able to record the name of her *tarawad*, but did not manage to ascertain that of the household into which she had married.

She told me that she had had five husbands, all of them paid (free) agricultural labourers, living as *kudiyiruppu* tenants of the same Cheralayam Nambidi *janmi*. She did not know the amount of rent paid yearly, but told me that her husbands' family had been settled here for a very long time - for eighty or a hundred years, as she put it. They had little work to do, not enough in fact to keep such a large family alive. They had been toddy tappers once. Kalyany had been married publicly

[Text continues on p. 189]

tarawad name was Neripatta, and the property now belonged to the old woman and her sons. They were *verumpattam* cultivators for a Nayar *kanamdar*, the Shoranur *desammangalam* (village headman) whom I had met. They paid a rent of five rupees.

I heard that of the old generation, the four brothers, Paini, Krishna, Raman, Aiyappan and Narayan, were dead – although there was some doubt about Narayan, the last one. As he had emigrated to Singapore and had never come back, they presumed that he had died there. They had all been wed polyandrously to Kali when she was seventeen, and she was now left with her four sons, who had begun by being polyandrous, but who had eventually taken wives of their own, the common wife, Paru, having stayed with the eldest, Velandi. The property had, however, not been split up, and they lived in the mansion-sized house, which was happily large enough to contain them all. Presumably it was also sufficiently big to keep the women from quarrelling and dragging the men into their squabbles – something which people who live in polyandry seem particularly to fear. Of the third generation, the two grandsons, Velu and Krishna, had also lived polyandrously, having taken one Kalyani as a common wife. Like their two sisters they had, however, died, aged thirty and twenty respectively, leaving a couple of boys with their widow to look after. There had thus been three generations of polyandrous marriages in this family.

Another point of interest was the fact that two of Kali's sons, Paragnoden and Krishna had broken away, the former after having first been married with his elder brothers to Paru. They had married their fathers' sisters' daughters, Vali in the first case, and Janeki in the second. When I enquired why this was so, I found it difficult to get a precise answer. I was told that was because this was a "right" marriage, and that if possible, marriage with a *machchunan* is "best". But I evoked only silence and some quizzical looks when I asked why then Paragnoden was first married polyandrously to Paru. It seemed to me – although this is only my personal impression and I was not told so – that the polyandrous marriage was gone through with because it was customary in those days, when the elder brother got married, for the younger ones to join in. Later, when Paragnoden, for reasons which he did not impart to me, felt like putting up a household of his own, he naturally turned to his cross-cousin, on his fathers' side. He was eighteen when he married Paru, with his brothers, and twenty two when he left her and took Vali to wife. This would not account, however, for Krishna, the youngest, not having also been married to Paru. It may be, of course that he was

595*
601
[427]

[67]

595*
582
601

*595 the cross-roads of the main Shoranur-Palghat highway of the road to
564 Lakkidi, a few furlongs down the latter, on the right hand side. In con-
[361] trast to the Thandan houses to which we had been, although not to the
Tiya (Thiyya) houses of the Cochin labourers, the place looked rather
[342] miserable. It was a thatched palm-leaf house, standing on a red laterite
[241] loam platform, in the middle of some paddy fields. There were signs
[231] about that these Tathans were not only goldsmiths but that they now
also practised agriculture. There was paddy lying about to dry in heaps
in the yard, and there were stalls for bullocks at the back.

*595 We interviewed a man called Raman and his brother Kochen, aged
[601] fifty four and fifty two respectively, who lived polyandrously with their
wife, Kurumba, forty five years old. They seemed rather impressed by
us, and were reluctant to speak. They observed the outward forms of
[574] hospitality, however, and presented us with fresh coconuts for us to
drink the milk.

Raman told us that the household's name was Padijarehil, meaning
"Western", and that it was part of five others which constituted the
[611] Uzhugaparekil *tarawad*. The latter was *makkathayam*, as we expected,
[614] and exogamous, as was also their *kiriya*, although, here too, they only
observed the rule in matters which concerned those members of it whom
they knew. They had two and a half acres of paddy fields, in simple
*595 *verumpattam* lease from a Nambudri Brahmin janmi called Kodiერთ-
•427 mana. For this they paid five rupees a year and handed in a part of the
243 harvest - five hundred *para*hs, I have in my notes, three hundred from
the *kanni* crop and two hundred from the *magaram*.¹ As it was an ordi-
nary *verumpattam*, there was no renewal fee. They had a deficit this
year of forty *para*hs (roughly lbs. 866½) and they were wondering what
they could do to make it good. Last year they had done "other work"
[44] (presumably such as hiring themselves out as labourers) in order to
raise the cash needed to compensate for the deficiency in grain, and
they might do the same thing now. When I asked them what kind of
*595 goldsmith's work they did, they laughed and said that they had given
[326] this up; how could they carry on with their traditional profession, they
[436] asked, when the sovereign which was once worth Rs. 25 had reached
Rs. 777

[601] Raman and Kochen had had eleven children in their polyandrous

¹ This again seems too much. It is equivalent to lbs. 10,830 (1 Palghat *para*h = 10 *edengalls* = 40 *nalis* (1 *nali* = *tolas* 21½ in s. Walluvanad and Palghat) = 866.40 *tolas*; as 40 *tolas* = 1 lb. in s. Malabar, 1 *para*h = 866.40 : 40 = 21½ lbs and 500 = lbs 10,830).

thayam was followed and caste, or rather sub-caste, endogamy. There was more polyandry in the second generation of this family than in any other encountered so far. I found that Kunji was married to two husbands; Lakshmi, aged thirty three, to four husbands; Paru, thirty, to two husbands; Sita, twenty eight, to three husbands; and Narayani, already mentioned, to two husbands. All the respective husbands were brothers, and only fraternal polyandry was practised. The women had all married early: Kunji and Yakshmi at sixteen, Paru at fifteen, Sita a bit later at twenty four, and Narayani, the youngest, at eighteen. The reason for which Sita had married later was that she had been taken by the three younger husbands of her elder sister Lakshmi, after seventeen years of marriage with the latter. Only Kanju, the eldest, had remained with Lakshmi, and Raman, Narayan and Krishna had decided to marry Sita jointly, when they found that she was not getting married and showed no inclination to do so outside. The two younger brothers of the Mudrikelparampil household, Raman and Kunyuni, were eighteen and sixteen when they took Nani to wife; she was now twenty. Polyandry certainly did not look as if it were dying out in the blacksmith's caste, judging, at least, from this striking example. [582]

The property upon which the family lived was worth four thousand rupees. It consisted of the house, some agricultural implements and a paddy field. The people were tenants of the Nambudri Brahmin janmi Kodierthamana, and paid him the rent of a customary *verumpattam* nine rupees yearly, plus a renewal fee of thrice the rent every twelve years. Poreyn and Kunyuni were practising smiths, hence the implements we had seen on coming in, and Raman worked at the Metal Industries Ltd. in Shoranur, where we camped. They also cultivated the paddy field to produce some of the rice they needed themselves, although the yield was not very great. The genealogy is given in Table 12. [595*] [435] [429]

On the 15th of November, 1949, together with interpreter and guide, I visited a family belonging to the third sub-caste of the Kammalans, that of the carpenters or *Asari* (often pronounced *Ashari*). I heard that laterite-cutters called *Puri-asari* or "mud carpenters" were assimilated to these people, but that they only constituted a division of the sub-caste. They are also reputed to be polyandrous; I did not have an opportunity, however, to verify this myself. [326] [243] [433] [595*] [564] [335] [333]

The *Asari* whom I saw that day, lived at Palappuram, a village on the main Shoranur-Palghat road, some few miles east of Ottappalam. The compound of the house was by the side of the road on the right, just beyond the village, coming from the west. It was a very poor looking [595*] [342] [367]

[Text continues on p. 199]

*kiriya*m; in that matrilineal descent group they limit themselves to not marrying those of their acquaintances whom they know belong to it. The sub-caste is also endogamous, carpenter only marrying "carpentress", and never a *Puri-asari*. Normally, boys alone can inherit the property, but if there are no male heirs, the girls, even if they are married, will inherit equal shares.

The members of the Perinkulam household were subtenants of a Nayar tenant called Mutad Achutha Nayar, himself the *verumpattamdar* of a Nayar *janmi* from Kavalappana near Shoranur called Kavalappaia Mupil Nayar. As *kudiyiruppu* tenants of the site where the house was built, they paid a yearly rent of only one rupee.

On the 17th of November, 1949, I visited the house of a member of the fourth and last sub-caste of the Kammalans, the *Musari* (often pronounced *Mushari*), bell-metal (an alloy of lead and brass) smiths or braziers. It was near Lakkidi in the Walluvanad taluk, one furlong north of the main road, and to reach it, my interpreters and I followed a very attractive path, sunk deep between high banks of earth and overshadowed with coconut and arecanut palm trees.

We arrived at a miserable house, standing in a grove of palms and plantains, a red laterite courtyard in front, in which could be seen some stone moulds in grooves - no doubt the foundry. There was nobody about, but when we called out, a little girl (whom we later heard was called Menakhi) appeared and said that she would go and fetch her father. He arrived soon afterwards, a big, strong man, fifty years old, called Krishnan. He wore his hair over his forehead in the typical Malayalam top knot, and he had a very ugly face.

The name of the household, he told us, was Puawutterparamba and it belonged to the Chelamanaparamba *tarawad*. Our informant was the youngest brother of three, and there was a sister called Kali, aged forty nine, about whom, however, he could tell us nothing at all. The whole family used to live, it seemed, at a place called Nedungothani, near Palappuram. That was their village, he said. But then, the elder brother, Konnan, now sixty five years old, had got married some thirty years ago to a woman named Sita whom he had met while "roaming about". He had married late as a result of this proclivity for wandering away from home, and, with his bride, aged fifty today (Krishnan could not tell us the name of her *tarawad*), he had moved to Wallancheri, near Kutipuram, Pattambi, because he had found business bad in Nedungothani. He was still living in Wallancheri and had five children, of whom four were married, the two daughters away to men of other vil-

The in the Carpenter Sub-Caste of the Kammalans -- Analyst

428
524

and boys had preference over girls in this matter, but the latter could inherit if there were no male heirs.

* 429

The plot of land upon which the house was built was leased to the family as a sort of *kudiyiruppu*. It cannot be called a fully orthodox one, since Krishnan said that he had paid fifty rupees to the former resident, a coolie of the Ertachan caste (low caste Nayar), twenty three years ago when he took over from him, and another fifty rupees to the *janmi*, a Nambudri Brahmin called Manjalata Nambudri. Since then, rent had been fixed at eight annas and six pies a year, but he had not paid it for the last two years, he said, because nobody had asked him to do so! He made his living all right as a brazier, although it was not a very lucrative profession.

* 595

564

[305]

[384]

Having been to polyandrous families of the four sub-castes of the Kammalans, I next went on to investigate the polyandry of their associated artisan sub-castes, of which six were reliably reported to practise it. I began with the *Kolla-kurups* or shampooers, masseurs and leather shield makers. To these are assimilated also the *Vil-kurups* or bow makers, but I did not have the opportunity to see any. There are a subdivision of the main sub-caste, on the basis of speciality, as the *Puri-asari* are of the regular *Asari*.

361

346

[587]

[351]

On the 20th of November, 1949, I went to the house of a *Kolla-kurup* near Palappuram. This town is on the main Shoranur-Palghat road, east of Ottappalam, just before reaching the cross-roads of Lak-kidi. We left the car on the highway, and proceeded on foot to the south of it, along a narrow, winding path which took us past luscious, green paddy fields lined with coconut trees, to a largish house, built of clay and laterite but thatched in the usual way, standing on an elevated piece of ground, like a platform. There was a gate to pass through, and as we went in we saw members of the family sitting about on a kind of rough, dried-clay verandah running round the walls of the building.

* 595

[391]

There were quite a lot of them, and they were all very gay and noisy. They started singing at the sight of us, and, laughing and shouting, made a considerable fuss of us. The contrast to the rather dismal atmosphere of the other houses that we had visited was very marked. After my guides and interpreters had somewhat quietened the children, we managed to speak to a man called Shankaran, aged thirty six, who was the eldest living male member of the family's second generation. With him were his wife and children, as well as his twenty five year old sister, Kalyany. None of the people wore anything from the waist upwards, and only a piece of cotton cloth covered the lower part of their bodies.

[Text continues on P. 206.]

619
564 The name of the household was Palappuram *Kalarikel*. Intrigued that it should have the same name as the neighbouring town, and that a new word instead of *tarawad* should be used, I enquired how this had come about. I was told that the *Kolla-kurups* did not have patrilineal clans of the usual Kerala pattern because they were too few and far apart; instead, they used the name *kalarikel*, which is that of a Nayar armoury for training soldiers, or a "gymnasium". This is in accordance with their profession as masseurs, and in order to distinguish them from each other, they qualified them with the name of the town or village in which they were situated. Otherwise, the same rules of marriage as in [428] the rest of the artisan caste were enforced: the *kalarikels* were patrilineal and exogamous, and inheritance was *makkathayam*. There were also *kiriya*s or matrilineal descent groups in which exogamy was observed; Shankaran was even able to give me the name of his, Pal, which meant "white", he told me. I was struck by the resemblance between the *kalarikel* system of the *Kolla-kurups* and that of the "villages" of the *Musaris* whom I had encountered three days before (see p. 202). It was as though this instance of something different from the more usual *tarawads* had acted as a transition between these and the *kalarikels* of the *Kurups* today.

*595
601 I made the family's genealogy, which is given here in Table 15. Shankaran had had two fathers, Raman and Karapan, both dead now, aged fifty four and forty two respectively. His mother was called Kunji, and was still alive, aged seventy. His fathers had had a sister, who died when she was thirty, called Paru and who had married a certain Krishnan of another *kalarikel*, at Malleshmangalam. There had been no issue from the marriage. Of his own generation, only he himself and his sister, Kalyany, were still alive. His eldest sister, Kuniyama, who had been married to two brothers, Kutan and Shanghuni of a *kalarikel* at Paratipullivil, had died when she was forty; her offspring included two boys, one of whom was married, and a girl, married polyandrously to two brothers, Balan and Bhaskar of Chunangad *kalarikel*. Kalyany had two husbands also, Kuniyuni and Velu, but I did not manage to record these men's *kalarikel*. (I took a photograph of Kalyany standing [126] at the entrance gate of the compound, with the paddy fields at the back, and another one of the family sitting round Kunji, the informant's twelve year old daughter, and listening to her singing a song; see Figs. 11 and 13.)

*595
•427
465 The house in which they all lived (except Kalyany who was only here on a visit to her brother, and lived elsewhere with her husbands), stood on land belonging to a *janmi* called Kollapuri Nayar. They did not pay

any rent for it, but on the contrary, received payment as shampooers and masseurs of their landlord. Fees for those services were, on an average, twelve annas per session, and they received the money at regular intervals from seven to fourteen or twenty one days. Four times a year (every "season"), they were also entitled to two bags of rice, food, oil for massage and a bath(?). (I am not quite clear as to what the latter item stands for, but this is what I have in my notes.)

On the 26th of November, 1949, I visited a *Tol-kollan* household, at Meitenadesam, near Ottappalam. The name of this sub-caste means literally "skin-workers", and its members are leather-workers and cobblers. The house in which this family lived was the most miserable of all those we had or were still to see. It stood in the coconut groves on the outskirts of Ottappalam, and we went there on foot. It was a broken down construction of woven palm leaves and mud walls and the thatch on the roof was in bad condition. An old lady called Kurumba (see Fig. 14), sat just outside the front door, bare breasted and with enlarged holes in the lobes of her ears so that she could accomodate the sizeable gold lumps which are inserted here in Malayalam fashion. With her was her elderly daughter, Kunji, who received us. She was very polite and insisted on offering us some fresh coconut milk.

When we asked her about polyandry, she scoffed at the idea and said that in her family at least, the practice had been given up already in the generation of her father and mother. The men quarrelled too much about the common wife, she said, and besides, the women resented it and did not want it any more. There were members of her sub-caste who were still polyandrous, but as they were few and far between it would not be easy to locate them.

Under the circumstances, it seemed useless to make out a genealogy of these people, and I did not have time to look for a polyandrous *Tol-kollan* family elsewhere.

From this house, in the evening of the same day and with the same interpreters and guides, I went on to the home of some *Kanisans* or astrologers, who are also known as *Panikkars* locally. Theirs was a better dwelling, standing hidden in a thick grove of plantains and coconut trees well shaded and pleasant. We were received by a man called Ramankuti, thirty five years old, who offered us some chairs to sit on and very readily answered our questions.

He told us that his household bore the name of Pellarmangalam, and that his *kalarikel* was similarly called. It appeared that *Kanisans* do not have *tarawads* either, and that their patrilineal clans are called "gymna-

564
614
[228] siums" too - for what reason, I could not find out; I could see no relation between astrology and a gymnasium. Like the *Kolla-kurups*, they also had *kiriya*ms which were exogamous as the *kalarikels* were; the informant's matrilineal clan was called Manga. Inheritance was *makkathayam*.

* 595
601 The family living in the house here, was divided into two sections. The first, of which Ramankuti was the eldest, consisted of himself and his brother, Ticheri, three years younger than him. Their father, who was now dead, had successively had two wives, Lakshmi and Kalyany, both of them still alive and living in the house; the first section was descendant from the first wife, while the other was issued from the second. Kalyany had had six children, of which, Paru, aged thirty, was the eldest; there were four brothers, Pachu, Shanghuni, Kumaran and Gopalkrishnan, and a younger daughter called Nani, aged twelve. The interesting part of the organization was that the two sections had both contracted polyandrous marriages: Ramankuti and Ticheri with one wife, Madhevi aged twenty eight: their four half brothers with Devaki, twenty three years old. Both women were from other *kalarikels*, the first from Kanganal and the other from Kavalapara. They all lived in the same house, however, with Nani, only Paru having married Krishnan of Kutiparli *kalarikel* and having gone off to live with him. Paru had three children with Krishnan, as did Madhevi with the informant and his brother. The four brothers had only one little daughter, aged one year, with Devaki. The genealogy, as it was dictated to me, is given in Table 16.

* 595
[791] Ramankuti told me that he and Pachu were the fully-fledged astrologers of the family. Kumaran and Gopalkrishnan were studying the art. Ticheri did odd jobs as a labourer, and Shanghuni was employed as a workman in the local match factory. The house that they all lived in was rented on a *kudiviruppu* lease for which they paid eight annas a year to the *janmi* of the land upon which it stood, a Nambudri Brahmin called Totapai Mana Nilakanda Nambudripad.

564
[796]
[305]
[505] On the 22nd of November, 1949, I went to Lakkidi to visit the house of a *Manan*. These people are washermen and barbers, and they play an important role in Kerala as it is they and they alone who can wash the polluted clothes of menstruating Nambudri Brahmin and Nayar women. But they are also dancers in the temple on festive occasions.

36
35 We found the house for which we were looking, in the actual village of Lakkidi, in the vicinity of the railway station, near the river. It was a moderately large, well-to-do building, standing isolated in a large compound, in which clothes had been laid out to dry on the ground.

(TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 210)

first moved to Mangode village, where Kali came from, for eleven years. 595*
Today they were living at Managhat, where Erechen had found it easier 601
to get work.

As Kunji, my aged informant, was getting tired, we now took on Krishnan, son of the late Krishnan by his second wife, Kunji (the repetition of the same names in a family in Kerala is very confusing). He helped us to check all this material and to correct some inaccuracies which had crept in. I noticed that in some cases it was impossible to obtain the name of the *tarawad*, and that the name of the village would be given instead. There were, however, no *kalarikels* with the Manans, I was told. The patrilineal clans were exogamous, as were also the matrilineal *kiriyams* of these people, although they were not very well known and practically neglected in present-day marriages. Inheritance was *makkathayam*, as expected, but I could get no confirmation of the reported four endogamous subdivisions described in the *Gazeteer of the Malabar and Anjengo Districts*, p. 130 (see Bibliography). [115] [551] 614 564 [582] [428]

This Manan family was living on ground belonging to a Nambudri Brahmin *janmi* called Mangala Mana C.M.C. Narayana Nambudripad, but they did not pay him any rent. They were there more as his employees and, in exchange for dwelling space, rendered him the invaluable services which he needed from them as washermen and barbers. 564 417 465

In the afternoon of the same day of the 25th of November, 1949, upon which I had visited a Thandan household (see above, p. 189), I went to Palappuram to see the family of a *Panan* (exorcist and leaf umbrella maker). 564 491 [443]

They lived in a poor but neat and cleanly house, situated in a rather thickly overgrown grove of the usual Kerala vegetation. On the verandah of the modest building of dried cow-dung and mud, a bare breasted woman, Sita, aged forty five, and three boys awaited us. She received us nicely and spoke quite readily. She seemed resigned to her poverty and conditions and only complained to us that she was not able to give the boys more and proper food. 595* [312]

She told us that she lived with the surviving husband of a once polyandrous union, in which she had been married when she was eighteen to two brothers, Panju, who had died two years after the wedding, at twenty one, and Korappan, her present forty four year old husband. She had had a daughter, Kunji, within the first year of her marriage, and four boys afterwards with Korappan. All the children, including the twenty six year old eldest girl, were unmarried; she was still breastfeeding the youngest, two and a half year old Kumaran. This, as I 853

853 could see, was obviously a way of circumventing the difficulty of adequate nourishment, something to which a great majority of the mothers in the vast multitudes of Asia habitually resort.

*595
[868]
[126] Father Korappan was away working, and he had taken twelve year old Krishna with him as an apprentice, so I was not able to photograph the whole family. But I obtained a picture of Sita with Kumaran at her breast and Chami and Narayan sitting next to her, which I give here in Fig. 15. The genealogy is in Table 18.

544
614
[428] Where *tarawads* were not known, Sita gave me the name of the village. From what she told me, the clans were patrilineal, inheritance was *makkathayam*, and exogamy was the rule, also in the *kiriyams*. Her husband's matrilineal descent group was called Walleananad. The house was leased as a *kudiyiruppu* for which they paid a yearly rent of twelve annas to the *janmi*, Eranur Mana Narayan Nambudripad. They had been fifteen years at this place, and had come from about a furlong away where they used to reside before. This awakened my curiosity, and I enquired how this had happened.

Sita told me that her husbands originally lived in the other house, because it was the *tarawad's* headquarters. The name Kundilpadam which it bore meant "low field", and Vellarkaden which was the name of their present house, was just the appellation by which their new dwelling was known. Her husbands' father was the youngest of a pair of brothers, and they had both taken wives to themselves and had not lived in polyandry. Their offspring, her husbands and their father's elder brother's children, had continued to live together, and they, Panju and Korappan, had married first, twenty seven years ago. Then, twelve years later, the cousins had also got married, and, in order to make place for them, Sita and her surviving husband, Korappan, being the junior members, had moved away to another residence, the one where they lived at present.

[601] I made the genealogy of the neighbouring household as the informant gave it to me. It is shown here in Table 19. Two brothers, Panju and Raman, respectively aged forty six and forty, lived polyandrously with a common wife called Cherona, thirty three years old. They had four children, of whom none were married, since they were still too young.

361 On the 21st of November, 1949, I went to Palamanpalam, a cluster of houses on the road between Ottappalam and the Lakkidi railway station, about a mile before the latter is reached. The object of our visit was to see a *Pulluvan* household, that is of herbalists and *nag* snake worshippers, a sub-caste associated to the artisans.

[Text continues on p. 214]

216

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

FLA 582 588 114
•427
ries "brother" but which really refer to someone of another village and *kiriyan*.¹

534 The Putanpumakkil house stood on ground belonging to a Nayar *janmi*, cousin of the former Secretary of the States Ministry in New Delhi, Sri V. P. Menon, called Wuppala Shankara Narayana Menon. They paid a *kudiyiruppu* rent of one *janan* (annas four and pies six) yearly. They made their miserable living from plying their traditional trade. To give me a sample of their musical abilities, they offered me a concert on the instruments which they used; those included the famous *Pulluva-kudam*, a sort of stringed instrument cum drum; but I am afraid that the effect was not pleasing to my ears.

162 564 While carrying out these investigations among polyandrous households in the Walluvanad taluk, I endeavoured to obtain statistics concerning the proportions of the sexes of the two principal polyandrous castes studied, the Thandans and the Kammalans, but they were unobtainable. The Tahsildar of the Walluvanad taluk, on instruction from [115] the Collector of Malabar, however, sent me the following letter:

"Tuluk Office, Walluvanad
Perintalmanna, Dt. 9-12-49

Sir,

Statistics of certain populations
Called for - Furnished.
Collector's Ref. W-4-1450/49 dated 4-12-49

As ordered by the Collector's reference cited, the statistics of Izhuvas and Kammalans are not available in the Census records available in this office. The figures now furnished are approximate and are based on local enquiries made by me and my subordinates.

	Male	Female
Thandans (Izuvans) /	5100	6100
Kammalans (Karuvans, Thattan, Musari & Assari)	2600	3100

signed

7 Menon
Tahsildar

9.12.49"

¹ Iyer, in *The Cochin Tribes and Castes* (Vol. I, p. 148, 1909 ed., see Bibliography), says that, with the Pulluvans "nor can a woman allow herself to conjugal servitude to more than one". In view of the above evidence, this pronouncement does not appear to be correct.

197
564 members have been the ablest of all in adapting themselves and in taking advantage of the new opportunities which the Europeans brought. To them have gone the best and most rewarding jobs both in and out of the administration, positions of trust and responsibility to which their long training as soldiers and managers of the upper castes in Kerala had possibly prepared them. I was astonished to find how many well-known names in present-day India still have their homes and families in Ottapalam of the Walluvanad taluk.

It has already been said how very much the Tiyas, everywhere in Kerala, have progressed, and how they, too, have taken enormous advantage of changed circumstances, especially education, to become today one of the most progressive communities in the State. Aiyappan's book is witness to this. Perhaps only the lower castes, such as Kammalans, other artisans, Cherumas, Pulayas, aboriginals and the poorer section of the Mopla Islamic community, have remained as they always were, and have shown no signs of taking advantage of the benefits brought in by foreign rule. It is not to be excluded, however, that it may be precisely for them that the new Communist government will legislate, especially for the landless agricultural labourers – but it is too early to say anything about this yet.¹

197
564
595 Following closely upon the replacement of the old order by a new one, polyandry, too, has crumbled in Kerala. The Nayars, whose non-fraternal polyandrous customs so forcibly struck the early Portuguese and other European travellers, have ceased to practise polyandry, at least in the pristine form in which it was described by the ancient writers. Since this polyandry appears to have been closely correlated with the military organization of the Sudra militiamen of the local rajas and chieftains, it was perhaps to be expected that, when the latter disappeared, the custom of non-fraternal polyandrous marriage went with it. Particularly as men living in a *marumakkathayam* system of inheritance seem to suffer greatly from the fact that they can leave nothing to their children, but only to those of their sisters. In a conversation that I had with His Highness the Maharaja of Cochin, at Ernakulam on the 18th of April, 1949, he told me that it was "un-natural" for a man not to be able to provide for his own children, and that, in his opinion, the custom could not survive much longer for this reason.

[423]
[427] ¹ A step has been taken in this direction with *The Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill 1957* which introduces comprehensive land reforms, including the right of "permanent tenants" to purchase land held by them, a ceiling on land holdings and fixation of fair rents.

423 The revenue paid to the State varies according to the nature of
651 the tenure. It is only the "Pandaravaka verumpattam" lands which pay the full pattam or share due to the State. The Pandaravaka verumpattamdars have full rights to the soil of the lands they hold and their rights remain undisturbed so long as they regularly pay the State revenue, but the rights to metals and minerals are reserved to the State.

In *Pandaravaka kanam*, the land is held on a lease in consideration of a sum of money supposed to have been advanced to the State, and consequently a certain amount is deducted from the State demand on account of interest on the amount advanced. Before the new settlement was made in 1905 it was the custom to renew the lease every twelve years on the renewal of which the kanamdar was to pay over 20 per cent of the kanam amount, plus half of the full pattam (rent) for one year and a fee of 5 per cent of the kanam amount or Rs. 3-2-0 (whichever is greater) for issuing a fresh renewal. But this practice is now done away with and the tenure is for all practical purposes the same as Pandaravaka verumpattam tenure with this difference only that from the assessment due thereon a deduction of one-third is made.

In Puravaka lands (literally lands which are outside) a third party called the Janmi is recognized as holding proprietorship and therefore entitled to share the produce with the cultivator and the Sirkar. The tenure is assessed by the Sirkar in the case of nilams at half the rates fixed for Pandaravaka verumpattam nilams and in the case of parambas at one-fourth.

Inams are personal grants or grants made in some cases for the performance of certain specified services in religious institutions, etc., and in others for services rendered on some previous occasion or for some other similar reasons either absolutely or on certain specified conditions. The deductions range from free assessment to one-third of the Pandaravaka verumpattam assessment.

In all these cases of tenure a royalty cess of six pises per rupee calculated on Pandaravaka verumpattam assessment is payable to the Sirkar.

427 The Janmis of Puravaka land let their land under different
423 tenures, viz., verumpattam in which they make full assessment; kanam and inam they treat as favourable, but the rates are not so fixed or settled as those of the Sirkar's tenures. The leases of the kanam* lands of the janmis are also renewed for twelve years, the janmi collecting certain dues from their tenants for the renewal of the same. The title of the tenant of such lands is precarious for the kanamdar can be evicted on the janmi paying back the kanam amount† at the end of the lease of twelve years. This state of affairs was unsatisfactory, and the State Government has recently passed a Bill called the "Cochin Tenancy Bill" of 1914, an extremely moderate measure indeed, passed in the teeth of much opposition from the Janmis. The Regulation intends "to make better provision for the payment of compensation for the improvements made by tenants, and provide for the speedy realization of rent and other customary dues, by investing the District

* [Kanam = lease. Kanamdars = leaseholders. — Ed.]

† I.e., the amount the kanamdar has deposited with the Janmi at the time of taking up the lease.

421 Munsifs and District Judges with summary jurisdiction in the matter." The provisions in the regulation apply only to "Kanam tenants who, by themselves or through their predecessors in interest, have uninterruptedly held the holding for a period of not less than thirty years prior to the coming into force of this Regulation," and provide some restrictions on the part of the landlord in matters of renewal of kanam holdings, and ejection of kanam tenants; and dispense altogether with the right of *Melkanam*. The Puravaka janmis in Watakancheri number 54, of whom a few are Nambudri Brahmans, the others being of various castes. The Nambudris are the big landlords.

423 These janmis also are in some cases the custodians of "devaswoms" (literally "wealth of the gods"), lands belonging to the local temples; these are treated by them just like their janmam lands, but they keep separate accounts for the same. The Sirkar also manages devaswom lands and there is a department in the State which manages the affairs of the temples and the property belonging to them.

Of the total number of landowners (about 150), only 34 with an area of 194.44 acres cultivate their own lands. The rest sublet.

Of the non-cultivating landowners a few are big janmis like the Nambudri Brahmans and the Paliath Atchan. The Nambudri Brahmans pursue no occupation but that of living in strict conformity with the duties of a Brahman. They study the Vedas and live a pious and cleanly life. Western civilization and ideas have not [426] penetrated to them. They maintain the joint-property system in which the whole property descends to the eldest male member. [837] Only the eldest male is allowed to enter into legal marriage, but he can marry two or three women; the rest keep Nayar females as their mistresses.*

The "Paliath Atchan" possesses much land in the State. The head of the family lives in a place near Cranganore. He manages his estates through departments and officials like the Sirkar. He is the biggest landlord in the State, and a powerful hereditary chief.

The small landowners who do not cultivate their lands pursue occupations like retail trade, Government service, law, etc. These generally sublet their lands to tenants who own no lands and try to exact from these latter as much rent as possible. There are also agricultural workers who neither own nor rent land; the caste of "Cherumas" belongs to this class. Also a few of the low castes, the Mappilas and in some cases the Christians,—male and female—engage themselves in such work. They are low paid. [465] Formerly these wages were in kind, but money wages have begun to prevail; but for harvesting work wages are invariably paid in kind, the worker receiving one para of paddy for every six gathered in.

The rents of paddy lands are paid in kind.

243 Agriculture.—Paddy is grown on all the wet lands. Out of the seasons, the cultivators also grow to a small extent such grains as gram and peas in the paddy lands. Area under paddy—653.24 acres.

* [This phrase must not be understood to mean that such Nayar women are maintained in any way by their Nambudri paramours. They depend on their own family property, which descends in the female line. The children of Nambudri Brahmans and Nayar women are reckoned Nayars, and are members of the joint family of the mother, and entitled to maintenance from that family property.—Ed.]

423 kanomdars who live in the village also possess lands in the neighbouring villages. In the centre of the village a very sacred and
 [346] important temple is situated. It has existed for nearly a thousand years, and it is believed by all the people of Malabar that many miracles have from time to time happened there. Many rich devotees have granted lands to it, and it is now the most important landowner of the village, possessing the janmam right over nearly
 [651] 200 acres of land, all leased to kanomdars. A large part of the temple land is not taxed by the Government, but a low amount fixed by the Government is collected by the temple authorities for its maintenance. This kind of tax is called *Sarvamanyam*. The temple is now managed by the Court of Wards. It belonged to the Zamorin, who handed over his estate to the Court. The Zamorin is the head of a *tarwād** of about 300 members, being the oldest man. Hence when he succeeds he is too old to manage well.

• 427 It has been stated that the chief kanomdars excepting three
 452 cultivate only the small strips of lands that they occupy and leave it to others to cultivate the rest of their lands. They do not follow any other occupation, but lead an idle life, collecting money from their tenants and lending their money to the poor on security of ornaments and other things. The tendency is for every man who has money to be a money-lender. The sowcars are money-lenders by profession, but every man who has money, instead of depositing it in a bank, lends it to others on high rates of interest. The landowner, the *vakil*, the official or any other class forms no exception to this rule. Only the traders use the bank.

427 There are 525 tenants not possessing kanom rights who hold land under kanomdars, and 54 agricultural workers having no land and not renting land. The largest tenant is a *Tiyya* occupying 80 acres.

Rents are paid both in money and in kind. The chief crop of the village is coconut, but nearly one-fourth of the area is under paddy cultivation. Rents of the coconut areas are paid in money, and those of paddy lands in kind.

651 *Land Revenue*.—Rs. 6,411-7-0. This is small because of the exemption of temple lands.

241 The paddy fields all give two crops per annum. When once a coconut is planted, it lasts for nearly 100 years.

412 *Implements*.—There are 542 ploughs in the village, all of the primitive type.

The other implements used are—

- (1) the levelling board,
- (2) a long stick for powdering the soil,
- (3) a short iron instrument somewhat in the shape of a knife for sowing the seed and transplanting,

(4) a rather long handled *mamoti*, a broad plate of iron sharp at one end and joined to a big stick at another somewhat perpendicularly.

(5) sickles,

(6) big rods used for winnowing the paddy and for separating the grain from the straw,

[428] * *f.i.e.*, a Navar family community, having inheritance in the female line. Such an estate is the joint property of all the female members of the family and their descendants, the male members of the family also having a right during their lives to support from the family estate, but not transmitting any right to their children.—Ed.]

426 money-lenders is absorbed in no time. In the last five years the number of money-lending shops has doubled and their funds invested by this means have trebled. There is yet a demand for money which is unsatisfied.

Another method of supporting, as it were, the poor, is to lend the seed for sowing on the promise that for every 100 measures lent they will return after the first crop, i.e., after four months from the time of lending, 120 or 130 measures. This means an interest of 60 per cent per annum. The cultivators do not as a rule save their own seed, because when they have no means of living they naturally use their seed for food. I am told this is the case with every paddy cultivator excepting the three rich agriculturists who are landowners. It must be confessed here that without such borrowing the cultivation itself could not at present be carried on.

The village is free from padials. The debtors only pay interest, but in the Palghat taluk the system of padials survives.

[585] The causes of indebtedness are not far to seek. Economic backwardness is the primary cause. Waste of money on drink and evil habits is not uncommon. In some cases debt is due to ambitious schemes which fail. Excessive display in marriage is not common in Malabar as in eastern districts. Non-Brahmans, especially the castes below the Nayars, pay only Rs. 20 or Rs. 30, according to their means, to the bridegroom, and sometimes not even that. Another Rs. 25 will raise a marriage above the ordinary level. Taking into account that a marriage will be performed in a family only once in five or six years this expenditure of Rs. 50 or so cannot be deemed great.

[421] The ordinary labourers, who number about 500, maintain themselves by their daily work and they are never in debt. It is the agricultural classes and those who are engaged in petty trade that are in debt. The only asset of the tenants is that they have to pay as advance one year's rent to the landowners and they receive for the advance 6 per cent interest. Even this is paid in some cases by borrowing.

There is no co-operative credit society in the village.

476
794 *Communal life.*—The Brahmans of this village have formed themselves into a society for mutual aid and convenience. This organization of the society is on the model of the old village republics. It exists for social purposes only. Two persons are elected biennially to look after the affairs and the income of the society. Every house is represented by its head in the village assembly and that assembly elects the persons. The sources of income to the society are—

(1) the interest on the already existing property which is about Rs. 3,000;

(2) for all social functions such as marriage, etc., the society as a whole has a claim for a fixed sum. The total income from these two sources may be estimated at Rs. 350.

The duty of the society is to appoint the village priest, village barber, village trumpeter and other persons essential for the performance of social or religious functions.

The whole income is spent on the worship of God. The particular ways in which it should be spent have been fixed long ago, and comprise a special feast for the Brahmans once a year, provision of a burial-ground and other public and necessary places

There is hardly any public tank. One stream (channel) flows along the northern boundary of the desam during rainy seasons when the fields become flooded. But its utility is limited since with the summer the whole channel is dried up. There are private wells in all gardens and sometimes in the fields of corn. But they are shallow for the most part and the water-supply is inadequate. The ryots who are wretchedly poor cannot afford to utilise modern progress in the field of well-boring, nor are they conversant with such developments. 312

There are woods and forests near the desam as we have before mentioned, but they are of no practical use to the people. The forest, which is outside the boundary limit of this desam, is under Government supervision and people are not allowed to cut trees. Other resources of the forest, moreover, are hardly taken advantage of, partly by the general apathy of the cultivator for improvement and partly by its being situated sufficiently far to dissuade them from incurring the necessary loss involved. At the same time it is in a way an influence to the ryots' detriment, for tigers, boars, etc., which the Akalanum and Mattur hills breed occasionally, make nocturnal depredations on the ryots' stock and corn fields. The peasantry are helpless against these enemies. 137

Occupation of land.—The private jenmam ryotwari holdings during the year of settlement (fasli 1313) are classified as follows:— 423

Pattadars paying	NUMBER.			Extent.		Assessment.		
	Single	Joint.	Total.	ACS.	C.	RS.	A.	
Re. 1 and less	2	...	2	...	50	1	8	
Rs. 10 and less but over Re. 1	7	2	9	7	71	33	14	
" 30 " " " 10 ...	3	2	5	18	21	96	7	
" 50 " " " 30 ...	1	...	1	7	8	37	5	
" 100 " " " 50 ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
" 250 " " " 100 ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
" 500 " " " 250 ...	1	...	1	99	56	401	13	
" 1,000 " " " 500 ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
Over 1,000 ...	1	...	1	718	80	2,315	4	
Total ...	15	4	19	851	86	2,886	3	

Out of 851'86 acres no less than 818'36 belong to the two jenmi landlords. There are no occupants of Government jenmam ryotwari land in the same year.

Almost all kanomdars are themselves cultivators. The two jenmis, who are Brahmans by caste, and nearly 10 other families

423

427

who come immediately below in the caste scale, are prohibited from cultivation by their social status, and hence have let or sublet their lands to tenants of lower castes.

427

The landholders themselves, who are in a minority, are fast disappearing. They are chiefly owners of small strips held for the most part by a kanom tenure from a jenmi. The growing indebtedness and the consequent process of alienation of lands which are now going on will ere long reduce these people to the rank of landless labourers. But the landholders must be distinguished from land owners. Strictly speaking those who own land are the pattadars who possess jenmam pattas and those few who hold from them lands on kanom tenure. The ownership of the kanomdar is very precarious, since for the most part the kanom being a small amount, and there being no governmental regulations against the arbitrary action of the jenmis, the kanomdars are at the mercy of their jenmis. The ancient right of usage of lands enjoyed by the people is now being sought to be taken away. The jenmis are oppressive in many ways. All sorts of excuses are eagerly clutched at for extorting money from the tenantry. Besides the very high rate demanded at the time of a renewal of tenure (usually these tenures are held for 12 years), there are exactions on the occasion of a death, marriage or other religious festival in the jenmi's household, and fines often in amounts more than Rs. 100 are levied right and left for silly reasons. Various instances have come within the personal knowledge of the writer. One family had to return some lands two years ago to the jenmi because when the term expired and when application was made for a renewal, the fee demanded was so high that 12 years' profit from the land could hardly equal the amount. One man was fined Rs. 100, because he refused to pay 2 annas as a subscription for a religious festival which the jenmi was then conducting. Another case of arbitrary oppression was recently reported to the writer by the sufferers. The jenmi was contemplating a pilgrimage and all tenants were asked to give Rs. 10 each for it within 24 hours! These are actual cases. Up till 1916 no man other than the two jenmis was allowed to tile his house, to build an upstairs building, or a gateway; even now it is rash for the ryot to ask for such permission. No woman is allowed to appear before the jenmi with covered breast, no man should approach him with more than single cloth wound round his waist, which should not fall below his knees. Even in these days of British rule these things are in actual existence! I have said so much to give an idea of the relation between the landlord and the tenant in this part of the country.

There are two other dangers to which the landholder is constantly exposed which need mention here, i.e., melcharth, and the recent policy of the jenmi to convert kanom holdings into verumpattam. Melcharth is the jenmi's right to make over by promise at his will to a higher bidder any portion of his land which is being enjoyed by the kanomdar under him on the strength of his right for the land for twelve years. This is constantly exercised by the jenmi and it has a very bad effect both economically and morally over the agricultural population. The other danger is of more recent origin and is the result of the panic created among the jenmis of British Malabar on the passing of the Jenmi-Kutiyar

- 427 regulations in the sister states of Cochin* and Travancore, which have placed a decided check on the arbitrary dealings of the landlord over the tenant in those countries. The fear of governmental interference in the near future to regulate the relations of the landlord and the tenant (for it is well known that this problem is an old one in Malabar, and even as far back as 1885, the popular administration of Mr. Logan had made a draft regulation on the same subject which was only abandoned for want of adequate support by the country and which formed the basis on which Cochin and Travancore could afterwards proceed) has stimulated the process of converting kanom lands into verumpattam, i.e., tenure at will. By this the jenmi has a double advantage. The lands are under his direct ownership, and as they are given to cultivation by annual contracts, he can at any time refuse, withhold or do what he likes with his lands. The lands also being as it were put to auction, will produce a higher rate of income than would be the case by giving it on kanom tenure. There is also a recent tendency on the part of the jenmi to raise the kanom amounts because in Cochin and Travancore this is made the basis for the regulation of rent. Till now the policy was to give lands on a nominal kanom, the advantage being in the facility with which they might reclaim the lands at pleasure.

241 The Cherumas (the submerged class) are the agricultural
465 labourers who neither own nor rent land. They work for their masters who give them a meagre allowance of 2 edangalis, i.e., 1/5 para (the standard measure) of paddy. With this he supports his wife and family. They are attached to their masters and loath to leave them.

427 Rents are always paid in kind and are high enough particularly in the case of annual holdings. Eighty per cent of the produce will go as rent to the landowner. The sole advantage for which tenants take up lands are, they say, (1) a few days' maintenance after the harvest, (2) the possession of straw, and (3) employment. But sometimes they have to pay rent in money and this is chiefly in seasons of crop failure. This is met in these ways:—(1) Direct borrowing, (2) profit of garden cultivation and (3) the institution of chit-fund,† which is widely prevalent among them.

241 The barber and the washerman of the desam are illustrations
463 of how customary occupations are modified by practical necessity. These people, while they perform their traditional occupations to the society and receive for it the fixed remunerations, have long taken to agriculture as their chief source of income. And they are among the chief farmers. There are two manufacturers of

* Vide p. 116.

[454] † [A chit-fund is similar to our Slate-clubs. The members meet periodically, usually every month, and each pays a defined sum into the fund. If it be an 'auction-chit,' the money so collected is given to the member who, not having received it previously, offers to give back the largest amount, e.g., if there be Rs. 100 in the chit, one member may offer to take Rs. 75 only. The remaining Rs. 25 is then divided among the other members. Security is then taken from the recipient of the Rs. 75 that he will continue to pay his monthly contributions till every member has had his turn. In the other variety of chit, the monthly sum is ballotted for. It is the same as Kuri, described on p. 124.—Ed.]

311

Land.

	ACS.
Wet land	681'07
Occupied dry land	231'12
Unoccupied dry land	1,221'92
Garden land	109'59

137

Woodlands cover an area of about 150 acres. Shrubs and thickets, as well as rank undergrowth are found almost everywhere. Big trees, scattered and in groves, are also abundant.

Fruit trees and scattered shade trees are abundant. Among the former may be mentioned the mango, jack, coconut and arecanut palms, the palmyra palm (yielding toddy), etc. There are numerous kinds of shade trees, many of which can be used as timber. Among timber trees specially may be noted the teak and the jack-tree.

312

Tanks and wells are very numerous. Wells indeed are too numerous to be enumerated. Every house has one or more and there are several in the fields, about one in an acre. There are more than 50 tanks, though some of them are mere ponds, dry in most months. A few tanks yield water unfailingly for irrigation on a small rate. They may be 6 to 20 feet deep and of varying lengths, from, say 10 to 100 feet. Some are of irregular shape. The wells are either circular or rectangular and from 10 to 40 feet deep—often deeper still. If circular their diameter measures from 5 to 10 feet and if rectangular they are from 6 to 10 feet broad and 8 to 16 feet long. A few are dry in summer, but many wells yield an abundant and unfailing supply of water for domestic and agricultural purposes.

There is a small channel passing through the village which is full during the rains, but mostly dry in the hot months. A dam is however put across it in some places and the scanty water stored up for future use. But there is not any very considerable quantity.

● 427

Occupation of land.—Most of the cultivated area is sublet to tenants. This is characteristic of Malabar, where most of the landlords do not themselves cultivate the land, but let it to others on short leases of 12 years called *kanom* leases. The *kanom* lease-holders in turn sublet the land, though a few of them actually cultivate it.

There are nominally 50 patta-holders and all of them come under the head of non-cultivating landowners. The richest have no particular occupation. Many are Nambudiri Brahmans not resident in the village, and they have comfortable positions as priests, preceptors, etc. The biggest landowners, who almost monopolise the land, are two or three in number and they live in ease on the revenues of their lands.

The great body of tenants own no land; they simply rent it on *kanom* lease or are tenants at will. There may be one or two among the landowners who are also the *kanom* tenants of some other landlord. But as a rule the *kanom* tenant owns no land.

There is a growing body of landless agricultural labourers.

By the census of 1901 there were 383 landholders (tenants) in that year. This number declined to 258 in 1917, paying land-revenue as stated below (note that the superior occupier contracts with his tenants that the latter pay the kist).

MALABAR

185

Less than Re. 1	...	...	...	...	54
From Re. 1 to Rs. 5	...	...	...	...	100
" Rs. 5 to Rs. 10	...	...	...	...	49
" Rs. 10 to Rs. 20	...	...	...	...	22
" Rs. 20 to Rs. 30	...	...	...	...	10
" Rs. 30 to Rs. 50	...	...	...	...	19
More than Rs. 50	...	...	...	...	4
					<u>258</u>

Many especially of those paying under Rs. 2 hold only the plots of ground in which their dwellings are erected.

Classification of holdings according to ownership.

Pattadars paying an assessment of	Number.	Extent.	Assessment.
I. Re. 1 and less	2	ACS. 0'26	RS. A. P. 0 15 0
II. Over Re. 1 and up to Rs. 10 (inclusive).	22	28'04	95 8 0
III. " Rs. 10 " " 30 " "	7	26'44	129 6 0
IV. " " 30 " " 50 " "	6	65'04	234 7 0
V. " " 50 " " 100 " "	3	55'39	196 5 0
VI. " " 100 " " 250 " "	2	106'97	301 4 0
VII. " " 250 " " 500 " "	1	62'15	274 7 0
VIII. " " 500 " " 1,000 " "	...	...	...
IX. Over Rs. 1,000	1	645'04	2,469 1 0

Thus the greater part of the cultivated land is owned by a single pattadar—a Nambudiripad, a very enlightened and sympathetic landlord who has a reputation for fairness and kind treatment. The majority of the other pattadars are also Nambudiris, very often holding the land as trustees of temples.

The following table shows the rate of assessment, area so assessed, with amount of assessment, of wet, dry and garden lands:—

	I. Wet land.		II. Garden land.		III. Occupied dry land.		IV. Unoccupied dry land.	
	ACS.	RS. A.	ACS.	RS. A.	ACS.	RS. A.	ACS.	RS. A.
At Rs. 7-8 per acre.	108'49	813 11	...	...	...	...	...	...
" 6-4 "	194'87	1,215 15	...	...	...	...	...	...
" 6-0 "	0'09	0 9	0'03	0 3	...	...	...	...
" 5-0 "	109'06	542 11	2'28	11 6	...	...	...	...
" 4-0 "	39'21	157 5	7'09	28 6	...	...	...	...
" 3-12 "	7'69	28 15	...	...	...	...	...	...
" 3-0 "	93'37	280 1	14'28	42 14	...	...	...	...
" 2-0 "	128'00	256 13	36'43	72 14	3'23	6 9	43'53	87 0
" 1-8 "	...	...	...	...	61'87	92 5	122'82	184 3
" 1-0 "	...	...	49'48	49 14	98'84	99 0	288'66	288 11
" 0-12 "	...	...	...	...	38'57	28 15	643'77	482 13
" 0-10 "	...	...	...	...	3'42	2 3	148'42	92 12
Total	680'78	3,296 0	109'59	205 9	205'93	229 0	1,247'20	1,135 2

311 The assessment under IV. Unoccupied dry is the potential amount, i.e., it would be levied if the whole area were cultivated.
 651 About one-third or one-half of it may have been at one time or another under cultivation, but the area cultivated in any single year is very small.

[427] Rents are generally paid in kind, though of recent years there is a tendency in some cases (e.g., when the tenant lives at a distance) to commute it for money at current market rates.

The village is assessed for land revenue at a permanent charge of Rs. 3,759-3-0, to which must be added (to obtain the total revenue demanded upon the village, for the year) the charges on the 'unoccupied dry land' actually under cultivation in the year. This last will vary from year to year; the possible maximum is above Rs. 1,000. There is a local cess of $1\frac{1}{4}$ anna in the rupee of kist levied by the Taluk Board for roads, etc.

241 Agriculture—Area under principal crops.—The area under this head varies from year to year according as more or less of the unoccupied dry land is taken into cultivation. For the year ending March 1916, the following figures are given in the village accounts but they are less exact than they appear, being partly estimates by the village officials.

Paddy—First crop, 847'20 acres; second crop, 460'51 acres.	
Pulses and grains	122'47 acres.
Oil-seeds, gingelly	155'89 "
" castor	12'59 "
Spices, etc.	87'23 "
Fuel and timber trees	63'00 "
Betel leaves	5'00 "
Vegetables and garden products made up of—	
Vegetables	59'41
Plantains and bananas	29'57
Coconuts	17'00
Mangoes	23'00
Arecanuts	9'00
Jack fruits	8'00

— 145'98

According to the 'A' Register the area of one crop wet land is 271 acres. In some years it appears that this area is smaller, because part of this is *potential* double-crop land, two crops can be raised on it under favourable conditions. But it may safely be said that some 150 acres of wet land yield only one crop. Such portion of the 'unoccupied dry' land which is cultivated in any year also yields but one crop—even that with difficulty, after lying fallow for one, two or more years.

The minimum available area of two-crop land is 409'73 acres. In some years (according to the weather and seasonal conditions) this may increase to some 525 acres. If irrigation could be extended more of the single crop area could be made to yield two crops.

243 Some fifteen to twenty-five acres may yield three crops, under favourable conditions.

All the wet land is utilized for paddy cultivation. Paddy is sown in May soon after the first rains. By the end of September or the beginning of October the first crop is harvested. The seed-